

**The Initiation and Development
of
Exporter-Importer Relationships**

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October 1998

Submitted to the University of Canterbury
in fulfilment of the requirements for a degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Abstract

This dissertation reports an exploratory study of exporter-importers relationships, using a multiple case study methodology to analyse the data from 36 dyads gathered through personal interviews of New Zealand exporters and importers in Australia, Japan and the United States.

Relationships are conceptualised as a continuum spanning relationship initiation, through development to quality relationships. Relationship initiation is linked to the export and supplier selection literature to yield a dyadic perspective of the search and selection process. Theoretical relationship stages models do not fit the empirical data and a revised relationship development model is proposed.

The continued influence of bid and vendor-related factors throughout export relationships raises questions about relationship marketing as a new paradigm and the 'death' of the marketing mix, as theorised by recent authors. The changing influence of these factors led to proposing relationship strength as a measure to position dyads on a relationship continuum, thus providing guidance on appropriate relationship tactics for each dyad based on its continuum position. Quality relationships are defined as a special condition of high relationship strength.

This study reveals that exporters lack understanding of the importers' perspective of the relationship and the factors important to importers' decision making. Therefore, the propensity of researchers to use surveys of exporters to understand performance provides an incomplete and potentially unreliable picture. Exporters must proactively seek an understanding of importer requirements and manage the relationship development process to provide robust export relationships.

This study provides a fresh perspective on exporting and raises questions which can provide many years of productive research. Current theory is challenged and new theory proposed.

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Acknowledgments

The successful completion of a research program of this nature requires the suggestions and support of many individuals. It is not possible to acknowledge the valuable advice from all contributors, however a few individuals require special mention.

First, my thanks to the exporters who entrusted their critical business relationships to me, and provided access to confidential financial and customer information. I also thank you for giving of your time, providing access to the data and, most importantly, introduced me to your overseas customers. I appreciate the act of trust this access entailed. The success of this research is directly related to your support.

I would like to express my thanks to Professor Bob Hamilton for helping to shape and structure my research. Without Bob's guidance these research results would not have been realised and this document would not have been completed in a form suitable for academic research. Bob's ongoing support for the research process and publication of articles as a learning process, has been critical to the development and publication of this thesis. Having been through this process under his guidance while being supported by his experience and wisdom it is easy to understand why he is sought after as a doctoral supervisor.

Dr. Graham Fenwick provided ongoing motivational support and timely advice on the use of analytical methods as a tool for achieving my research objectives, rather than the driving force for the research.

Professor J. George, the Head of Department, was sufficiently bold to accept me for a lecturing position while this research was completed. Although it is easy to be wise with hindsight, John was confident enough to commit to an overseas business person whom he had met briefly on one occasion. It was this commitment which brought me to the University of Canterbury.

I would also like to thank my friends and research associates at Synergetic Consulting Inc.¹ in Tokyo: Ms. E. Matsuo and Dr. E. Tamura, CEO, Synergetic Consulting Inc.,

¹ Dr. Tamura and Ms Matsuo were employed by AT&T Solutions in Tokyo during the field research component of this study.

Japan. Without their practical support and guidance the Japanese component of this research would have been infeasible. Their knowledge of business terminology also assisted the interpreting process.

I must also thank my dear wife for her patience, understanding and support of a fundamental shift in income while I pursued this research degree. She continued to support my studies while she laboured through supervising a house renovation, maintaining our home and carrying the extra burden of a frequently absent husband. Also our children, Kirstin and Matthew, for their tolerance of my absence from cultural and sporting events which were so important during their intermediate and high school years.

The research reported in this thesis is wholly my own and I accept full responsibility for any errors and omissions in the contents. I gratefully acknowledge the funding support and resources provided by the University of Canterbury, TRADENZ and AT&T Solutions in Japan which made this research possible.

Finally, I must acknowledge the role of faith and prayer in this endeavour. The journey has been relatively trouble free, to a point where my human nature expected difficulties due to the apparent ease of the process. As with most doctoral students, the length of the process tested my patience and perseverance, but the end was never in doubt. I also thank all those who supported this work through their prayer, particularly over the last few months. We have a truly amazing God.

Ashley Lye
Christchurch
New Zealand
October, 1998

Foreword

Ashley Lye's background is twenty years of international business experience, including extended periods in New Zealand, the USA and Japan. Initially he worked in industry and auditing in New Zealand, prior to completing an MBA (Iowa, USA), followed by management consulting for a 'Big 6' accounting firm in the US. After a brief return to New Zealand he was 'headhunted' to Minneapolis to return to management consulting. Two years later he was seconded to the US firm's joint venture consulting company in Japan. During the next six years he: provided management consulting services; was the US firm's joint venture representative; hired, trained and developed Japanese staff; implemented a quality assurance program; became CFO of the joint venture company; and, became a partner in both the US and Japanese firms. His work involved assisting Japanese companies develop international operations and assisting foreign companies with Japanese market entry strategies, business process re-engineering, market research, systems strategy and implementation, and resolving cross-cultural business issues. Ashley's experience in the US and Japan assisted in shaping this research.

The results reported in this dissertation are being rewritten in article format for publication in scholarly journals. At the date of submission, the status of these articles is as follows:

Lye, A.R. and Hamilton, R. (1998), "Brand Perceptions and the Exporter-Importer Relationship", *The Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 5, No. 6, pp. 441-449.

This paper, based on Chapter 6, was published in 1998. The following paper, based on Chapter 4, has been accepted for publication in the *European Journal of Marketing* and will appear in the year 2001:

Lye, A.R. and Hamilton, R.T. (1998), "Search and Performance in International Exchange", *European Journal of Marketing*, (forthcoming).

Chapter 5 and 6 are currently being drafted into article format for publication.

In addition to journal articles, the following presentations and conference papers (with proceedings) have been developed from the dissertation research material:

Lye, A.R. and Lysonski, S. (1997), "Exporter Performance: Getting Close to the Customer", *Proceedings of the World Marketing Conference, Volume VIII, 1997*, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia, p. 344.

Lye, A.R. (1996), "Initiating Exporter-Importer Relationships: Does Importer's Country Make a Difference?" in *Proceedings from the 1996 Australia New Zealand Marketing Educators Conference*, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, pp. 664-668.

Lye, A.R. (1995), "A Framework for Understanding the Export Marketing Literature", *Proceedings from the 1995 New Zealand Marketing Educators Conference*, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, pp. 260-265.

Lye, A.R. (1995), "Foreign Determinants of Variations in Export Performance within Selected New Zealand Product-Markets", *New Zealand Marketing Educators Conference Doctoral Colloquium*, November.

Additional conference papers are forthcoming.

Importer transcripts were made available to the related exporter when the importer authorised sharing the information. This data proved commercially valuable. One exporter reported significant changes to their Japanese business relationship on their ensuing visit and was able to meet senior executives he had not previously dealt with. This resulted in a more strategic approach to the Japanese market for their product.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Outline

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Overview of the Study Structure

1.3 Research Background and Chapter Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Objectives:

The objectives of this research are to:

- i) improve our understanding of the relationship between exporters and their associated importers;
- ii) provide a dyadic perspective of international supplier selection;
- iii) identify areas of dyadic misunderstanding in the international business decisions of importers; and,
- iv) provide insight into the process of relationship development and relationship quality.

To achieve these objectives, this study adopts a dyadic perspective of the exporter-importer relationship, comparing perceptions of the important factors influencing each dyad and the process of nurturing and building the international business relationship. The primary focus is on the importer's perception of the New Zealand exporter, the gaps in understanding within the exporter-importer dyad, and the linkage of these factors to export performance.

The majority of export marketing research has focussed on the exporting firm and how the "internal" dimensions of the firm influence the firms export performance. The case studies in this report lend support to the need to go beyond the internal dimensions, to the overseas customer, to understand significant factors affecting the performance of exporting firms. Furthermore, while research separates the buying decision process from the relational dimensions of the dyad, the inter-relationship between these components is clearly revealed by these case studies. These results indicate a need to move beyond a unidirectional perspective in the context of dyad respondents and the strategic factors influencing export performance (Liang & Parkhe, 1997).

The specific research questions addressed by this research are:

- a) How well do exporters understand importers' supplier selection criteria and level of satisfaction?

- b) Is an exporter's performance related to their understanding of the importer's decision criteria and level of satisfaction?
- c) How do exporting and importing companies build international relationships?
- d) Do the current relationship development models adequately reflect the actual relationship development process?

The need for dyadic, qualitative research about the nature of channel relationships was highlighted by Weitz & Jap (1995):

"Descriptive information about channel relationships in the real world offers an important source of data for theory development that has not been exploited. ... It is disappointing that qualitative research in marketing has focussed primarily on consumer behaviour and not examined marketing activities within a firm or the relationship between firms." (p. 310).

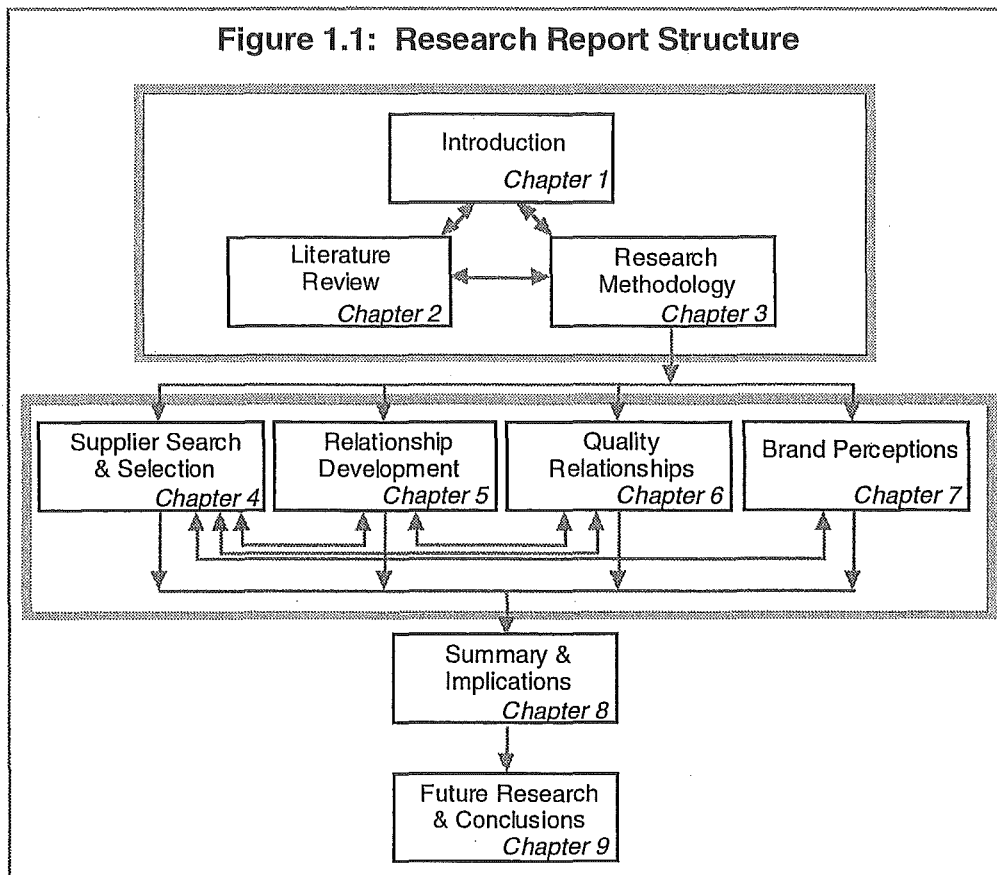
"... the extant research ... does not provide much information about how or why (these) relationships develop, how they are maintained ..." (p. 311).

"Research on channel relationships requires a refocus of attention from the individual channel member to both parties in the relationship and the nature of the relationship." (p. 317).

This research addresses most of these comments.

1.2 Overview of the Study Structure:

This study is structured around the two primary areas of investigation: the supplier selection process, and relationship development. In addition, relationship quality, measures of existing dyadic relationships, and the role of brands in international business are analysed and reported. Schematically, the study can be represented as outlined in Figure 1.1. Although this structure may appear hierarchical, the process required iterative loops during the design and analysis phases.



1.3 Research Background and Chapter Contents:

The genesis of this research was the practical world of international business in the US and Japan. The refinement of the process and academic rigour was the result of merging academic standards with business reality. The contribution of this research must be measured against the extant literature. Chapter 2 presents a review and summary of the exporting literature using a typology developed by the author. It reveals that the primary focus of export research has been on internal determinants of export performance measured by surveys of exporting firms. The results of this research have been significant, however they fail to adequately explain the variations in export performance they seek to understand (Liang & Parkhe, 1998). This case study research adds to the extant literature by incorporating the importer's perspective as a contrast to and explanation of variations in the exporter's performance, and by providing insight into the initiation and development of international business relationships, an area which is pivotal to an understanding of performance outcomes.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology utilised in this study. It is an outline, of necessity, as it is not feasible to include the entire process involved in the qualitative and quantitative components of the research. Additional information on specific analytical approaches is included within the relevant chapter.

Chapter 4 reports findings related to the international search for trading partners and the factors influencing supplier selection. The importer's level of importance and satisfaction with their dyad partner is matched to the exporter's perception of the importer's level of importance and satisfaction to identify gaps in understanding. Finally, the dyads are analysed to reveal the existence of the export sales life cycle.

Chapter 5 includes various dimensions of developing the exporter-importer relationship. The current relationship stages approach to relationship development is analysed and found to be inconsistent with the data. An alternate empirically-based relational development model is proposed. Then, the role of trust as a critical relational variable is examined, with particular attention to the relationship development process.

Chapter 6 explores two dimensions of relationship maintenance, relationship quality and relationship strength, from an exporter-importer perspective.

The role of brands, in an international business-to-business context is examined and significant differences revealed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 summarises the findings of the previous four chapters and refocusses the various analytical findings on the underlying research questions which drove the research. This is followed by the author's interpretation of the research findings as it applies to the horticulture and outdoor apparel exporters and the overall implications which can be derived from the results.

Chapter 9 presents the conclusions from the research; their implications for New Zealand exporters; research limitations; and, recommendations for future research.

The nature of the research has led us to select a multiple case study methodology based on Yin's (1994) case study methodology, utilising the exporter-importer dyad as the unit of analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Outline

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Major Themes in Export Research

2.2.1 Public Policy Influences

2.2.2 Non-Exporters

2.2.3 Discontinued Exporters

2.2.4 Internationalisation Process

2.2.5 Internal Influences on Exporting

2.2.6 Export Research Focus

2.3 Other Relevant Research

2.3.1 Export Relationships

2.3.2 Other Related Research

2.4 Review of Selected Articles

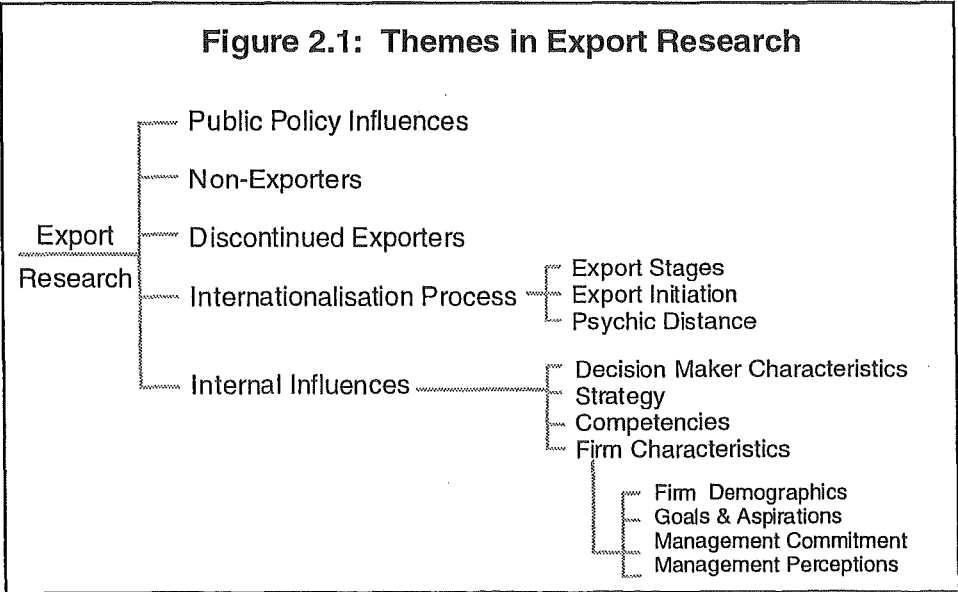
2.5 Summary

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction:

The design and focus of the research in this report is unusual in that it is positioned on the edge of current export research, reaching into the emerging relationship marketing literature. To understand the context of this research it is necessary to understand the structure and focus of the extant literature for both exporting and relationship marketing. Therefore, the first few sections of this chapter includes a broad review of the literature to provide the research context, followed by a more detailed review of the few articles closely related to this study.

The large body of export literature presents a challenge to assimilate and comprehend its scope, the consistency of its findings and to identify the context of further research. To facilitate the process of assimilation for this study, a framework was developed based on existing export research typologies and this will be utilised in this chapter. At the heart of the initial structure was the general exporting model proposed by Aaby & Slater (1989) based on research through 1988, however this quickly expanded to incorporate subsequent research and a broader export focus. The resulting framework is presented in Figure 2.1.



This literature review does not purport to be an authoritative review of the entire export literature, but rather it represents a review of the major themes within published research. Therefore this chapter's focus is on developing an understanding of the scope of enquiry rather than discussing research results. Actual results which are relevant to this research will be discussed in each chapter, prior to presentation of my findings.

Five major themes have evolved within the export literature: public policy influences; non-exporters; discontinued exporters; the internationalisation process; and, internal influences on exporting. These are presented in more detail in the following sections.

While it is recognised that the classification of the research into these themes may be considered subjective, it is the context of the research rather than the specific allocation of each article which is relevant to this study. Therefore, the framework provides a structure for presenting the extant literature prior to positioning my research.

The majority of research encompasses multiple research topics, therefore articles have been assigned to multiple branches in the framework. The articles referenced within the body of this chapter are representative of research within the area under discussion, rather than representing a complete bibliography for the topic. Further information on the cross-referencing of topics and specific articles is provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Major Themes in Export Research:

2.2.1 Public Policy Influences:

Research into government initiatives to encourage export activities have provided limited support for the effectiveness of these activities. Research has examined export assistance schemes (Barrett & Wilkinson, 1985; Chetty, 1994), government incentives (Christensen, da Rocha & Gertner, 1987), the formation of export groups (Joynt & Welch, 1985), and the importance of government services to exporters (O'Rourke, 1985). In general, the results fail to support the value of government incentives.

Despite continued government activity to promote exporting, there has been limited research activity in this area in the last ten years.

2.2.2 Non-Exporters:

This research attempts to understand why companies which apparently possess export potential none-the-less do not export -- "48 of 70 non-exporters stated that they could export" (Simpson & Kujawa, 1974, p. 112). This research is normally conducted as a comparison of non-exporting and exporting firms to highlight differences which might be addressed to initiate export activities in non-exporting firms.

Research has identified numerous differences between non-exporters and exporters, including perceptions (Simpson & Kujawa, 1974; Barrett & Wilkinson, 1985; Chetty & Hamilton, 1993), export barriers/problems (Kaynak & Kothari, 1984; Barrett & Wilkinson, 1985; Chetty, 1994), size (Yaprak, 1985; Kau & Tan, 1989; Chetty & Hamilton, 1993), behavioural differences (Cavusgil, Bilky & Tesar, 1979) and, firm and management characteristics (Cavusgil & Noar, 1987; Kau & Tan, 1989).

Research on non-exporting firms is often related to government initiatives to stimulate export activities. While research continues, there have been fewer publications in recent years.

2.2.3 Discontinued Exporters:

Discontinued exporters have received relatively little research attention. The difficulties associated with identifying discontinued exporters and finding executives involved in the export activity and withdrawal decision make this research problematic.

O'Rourke (1985) found that the 24% of 218 exporting firms that were no longer exporting tended to be smaller firms, however no further analysis was provided. Christensen, da Rocha & Gertner (1987), in a longitudinal study of continued export activity found both firm characteristics (product quality, standardised products, firm size, diversification, idle capacity) and, export management practices and experience (withdrawal in one market, internal problems, reliance on government incentives, lack of planning, export focus) differentiated between discontinued and successful exporters.

The study of discontinued exporters is important to understanding why companies withdraw from the export market and to reduce the ‘back door’ loss of exporters to national economies. However the difficulties associated with this research make it less attractive to researchers.

2.2.4 Internationalisation Process:

Research into the internationalisation process of firms is inextricably linked to the export process. Within this research stream there are three sub-themes which have emerged: export stages; export initiation; and, market selection. Although these sub-themes are linked, they are presented separately for clarity.

2.2.4.1 Internationalisation Stages:

Internationalisation is generally proposed as a series of stages which an exporting company passes through. A comparison of selected internationalisation stages models is provided (Figure 2.2) to indicate the focus of this literature. These models vary from four (Pavord & Bogard, 1977) to six stages (Bilky & Tesar, 1977; Reid, 1981; Czinkota & Johnson, 1981; Czinkota, 1982).

Figure 2.2: Comparison of Selected Internationalisation Stages Models							
	Pavord & Bogard (1977)	Bilky & Tesar (1977)	Cavusgil (1980)	Reid (1981)	Cavusgil (1982)	Czinkota & Johnson (1981)	Czinkota (1982)
1	No Activity	No Interest	Domestic Marketing	Domestic Marketing	Pre-Involvement	Unwilling	Completely Uninterested
2	Passive Activity	Reactive Exporter	Pre-Export Stage	Export Awareness	Reactive Involvement	Uninterested	Partially Interested
3	-	Exploring	-	Export Intention	-	Interested	Exploring
4	Minor Activity	Experimental	Experimental Involvement	Export Trial	Limited Experimental Involvement	Experimenting	Experimental
5	-	Experienced	Active Involvement	Export Evaluation	Active Involvement	Semi-experienced - Small firm	Experienced - Small
6	Aggressive Activity	Proactive	Committed Involvement	Export Acceptance	Committed Involvement	Experienced - Larger	Experienced - Large

Internationalisation stages research has studied stage characteristics (Cavusgil, 1984b), market research activities (Cavusgil, 1984c), psychic distance (Hedland & Kverneland, 1985), and the role of exporting in the internationalisation of multinational firms (Buckley, 1984). A multi-variable internationalisation index was proposed by Sullivan (1994), challenged by Ramaswamy, Kroeck & Renforth (1996) and followed by a response by Sullivan (1996). Johanson & Vahlne (1979) proposed an alternate stages process, arguing that “internationalisation is the product of a series of incremental decisions” (p. 23), the acquisition and interpretation of knowledge, and the influence of experience.

Finally, there have been challenges to the stages approach (Hedland & Kverneland, 1985) which indicate that the reality does not conform to the stages model requirements.

Research into internationalisation is ongoing, but at reduced levels as the focus of research has shifted to other aspects of exporting.

2.2.4.2 Export Initiation:

Export initiation research seeks to understand the trigger mechanism for companies initiating export activities. Research indicates that these triggers can be internal or external. The major external trigger for exporting is an unsolicited export order (Bilky & Tesar, 1977; Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Johnston & Czinkota, 1982; Kaynak, 1982; Tesar & Tarleton, 1982; Kaynak & Kothari, 1984; O'Rourke, 1985; Samiee, Walters & DuBois, 1993; Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994).

A number of internal export initiation triggers have been researched, including management perceptions (Simpson & Kujawa, 1974; Kaynak, 1982; Bodur, 1994), impulse (Lee & Brash, 1978), competitive advantage (Kaynak & Kothari, 1984; Hook & Czinkota, 1988; Bodur, 1994), innovation (Samiee, Walters & DuBois, 1993), capacity/market conditions (Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Kaynak, 1982; Kaynak & Kothari, 1984; Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994), pre-export activities (Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch, 1978; Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994), and organisation structure (Bodur, 1994).

2.2.4.3 Market Selection:

Market selection research analyses the pattern of export destinations to determine the market selection process. This research is usually conducted in association with other export research, rather than as a separate study. There are two major subsets, psychic distance and geographic distance.

Research has included perceptions of the psychic distance of countries (Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990), the effect of psychic distance on channel structure (Klein & Roth, 1990), psychic distance and performance (Ali & Sim, 1996) and, the negative effect of a large psychic distance (New Zealand Trade Development Board, 1992).

Geographic distance has been studied in combination with other variables, for example, geographic distance and industrialisation level (Kaynak & Kuan, 1993) and geographic and cultural distance (Akoorie & Scott, 1996).

2.2.5 Internal Influences on Exporting:

There is an extensive body of research on the internal influences on exporting. This has been summarised, within my export research framework, under four sub-themes: decision maker characteristics; strategy; competencies; and, firm characteristics. Firm characteristics is further subdivided into firm demographics, goals and aspirations, management commitment and, management perceptions.

Aaby & Slater (1989) summarised the export literature for 1978~1988, updating and refining the previous summary by Bilky (1978). Chetty & Hamilton (1993) supplemented Aaby & Slater's 55 articles with an additional 28 pre-1988 publications and included subsequent research through 1991. The literature review associated with this study has identified further pre-1988 articles, emphasising the difficulty in obtaining a complete set of the literature. The incompleteness of these summaries does not however detract from the validity of the subject areas identified within the review articles. Therefore, the focus of this literature review section is on post-1991 articles, plus pre-1991 articles previously omitted, which add to Aaby & Slater's general export model.

2.2.5.1 Decision Maker Characteristics:

Studies of decision maker characteristics investigate which characteristics directly related to the export decision maker influence the decision to export and export performance.

Characteristics investigated in multiple studies include value systems (Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch, 1978; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990), overseas experience or travel (Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch, 1978; Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Ali & Masters, 1988; da Rocha, Christensen, & da Cunha, 1990; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990, 1991; Caughey & Chetty, 1994), international orientation (Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch, 1978; Reid, 1981; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990; Koh, 1991), expectations/risk (Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch, 1978; Reid, 1981; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Ali & Masters, 1988; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990, 1991; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Caughey & Chetty, 1994), age of decision maker (Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990, 1991; Caughey & Chetty, 1994), education level (Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Kau & Tan, 1989; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990, 1991; Koh, 1991; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Bodur, 1994; Caughey & Chetty, 1994), foreign language skills (Brooks & Rosson, 1982; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1990, 1991) and, industry experience/competence (Ali & Masters, 1988; da Rocha, Christensen, & da Cunha, 1990; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1991; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Bodur, 1994). Other characteristics studied include information exposure, CEO's share of capital, number of previous employers, rigidity and, proneness to change.

2.2.5.2 Strategy:

The general export model included strategy components for market selection, product and product line, pricing, promotion and distribution. The '4 Ps' of the marketing mix are fundamental to marketing strategy and there are many articles addressing these four

variables (Marr, 1994; Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Cavusgil & Zou, 1994; Styles & Ambler, 1994; Chancy & Goddard, 1996)².

Strategy decision making processes researched include factors affecting strategic choice (Ayal & Zif, 1979), entry strategy (Johansson & Nonaka, 1983; Klein & Roth, 1990; Morgan & Sarris, 1991), market selection (Chetty & Hamilton, 1993; Dominquez & Sequeira, 1993; Kaynak & Kuan, 1993; Akoorie & Scott, 1996), and a diversification versus concentration approach (da Rocha, Christensen & da Cunha, 1990; Beamish, Craig & McLellan, 1993; Cavusgil & Kirpalani, 1993; Dominquez & Sequeira, 1993; Bodur, 1994; Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach, 1995).

Channel structure research (Chan, 1992; Beamish, Craig & McLellan, 1993; Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach, 1994; Chetty, 1994; Bello & Lohtia, 1995) has been supplemented by research on specific intermediaries (export management companies, Brash (1978); overseas sales subsidiaries, Ford, Lawson & Nicholls (1982); international joint ventures, Ali & Sim (1996); piggybacking, Terpstra & Yu (1990)), and related to the frequency of export activity (da Rocha, Christensen & da Cunha, 1990).

Focussed research has also addressed other individual marketing mix variables, such as pricing (Thach & Axinn, 1991) and product adaptation (Chiesl & Knight, 1981; Johansson & Nonaka, 1983).

Export strategy research has provided valuable information regarding the decision making process within the export company and which strategies are associated with higher performance, however there is scope for additional research in this important area.

2.2.5.3 Competencies:

Competencies are abilities which create a competitive advantage, or at least exceed the market minimum requirements, allowing the export company to succeed in the

2 These references include articles which are primarily '4P' related, rather than other aspects of strategy. Articles including other strategy variables are references under those variables to avoid unnecessary duplication.

destination market. Aaby & Slater (1989) included technology, export market knowledge, planning, export policy, management control, quality (control & product related), and communication as competencies. Additional competencies identified in the research are presented in Table 2.1, with the associated authors.

Competency in marketing mix requirements (product design/adaptation; distribution advantage; advertising/promotion advantage; price competitiveness) are linked to higher export performance. The importance of customer service has emerged, as has entrepreneurial ability and the use of market research and other information. Taken with the original competencies, there are many important influences on performance, indicating a need for a well-established approach to exporting.

Table 2.1: Competencies									
Author(s)	Year	Competencies							
		Product Design/ Adaptation	Customer Service	Market Research/ Use of Information	Entrepreneurial Ability	Distribution Advantage	Advertising/Promotion Advantage	Price Competitiveness	
Cunningham & Spigel	1971	•	•			•			
Ford, Lawson & Nicholls	1982				•				
Marr	1984		•						
Cavusgil	1985			•					
Christopher, Lancioni & Gattorna	1985		•						
Beamish & Munro	1987	•	•			•			
Samiee, Walters & DuBois	1993			•					
Beamish, Craig & McLellan	1993	•	•			•			
Cavusgil & Kirpalani	1993	•				•			
Dominquez & Sequiera	1993	•		•					
Kaynak & Kuan	1993	•							
Aksoy & Kaynak	1994	•				•			
Bijmolt & Zwart	1994			•					
Cavusgil & Zou	1994	•	•			•	•		•
Styles & Ambler	1994			•					
Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach	1995	•							
Chaney & Goddard	1996	•							

2.2.5.4 Firm Characteristics:

Research into ‘firm characteristics’ investigates the exporting company as a unit, as opposed to the decision-maker research reviewed above. Aaby & Slater (1989) included three major themes in their general exporting model: firm size; management commitment; and, management perceptions. Firm size has been renamed ‘firm demographics’ to represent a wider range of subsequent research and ‘goals and

aspirations' has been added. Goals and aspirations are related to strategy, but at a more detailed level, providing a bridge between the strategic and operational level. Goals and aspirations may vary between firms following the same general strategy, that is, they are specific to the firm, therefore their inclusion at a firm level within this framework.

2.2.5.4.1 Firm Demographics:

Firm demographics originated in studies of the association between firm size (number of employees and/or sales value (\$)) and export success, and has expanded over time. Many researchers interested in other aspects of exporting gather firm demographic data to provide background information. Studies specifically focusing on firm size effects include Bonaccorsi (1992) and Calof (1994). In some wider export studies size is the only firm demographic variable (Cavusgil & Kirpalani, 1993; Chetty & Hamilton, 1993; Caughey & Chetty, 1994; Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach, 1995).

Additional firm demographic variables included in export research are the age of the firm (Kau & Tan, 1989; Holzmüller & Kasper, 1991; Kaynak & Kuan, 1993; Bodur, 1994), number of years exporting experience (Kaynak & Kau, 1993; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Bodur, 1994; Cavusgil & Zou, 1994; Akoorie & Scott, 1996), firm ownership (Kau & Tan, 1989), firm structure/flexibility (Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994) and, firm culture (Holzmüller & Kasper, 1991).

2.2.5.4.2 Goals & Aspirations:

Goals and aspirations are the firm-level objectives relating to export activity, or to capture the influence of export activity on general firm objectives, for example, Weidersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch (1978) propose goals of the firm (eg.: stability, growth, profit) as a driving force for exporting.

Cavusgil, Bilky & Tesar (1979) found aspirations for security and growth helped to differentiate exporting from non-exporting firms in their export profitability model. Cavusgil & Nevin (1981) found managerial aspirations (growth, profits, market development) significant in their model of export market behaviour. Cooper &

Kleinschmidt (1985) and Kleinschmidt & Cooper (1984) found corporate growth goals were one of the significant factors differentiating 'world' and 'neighbour' marketers.

As a contrast, Axinn (1988) found that firm goals were not significantly related to export performance (export intensity).

2.2.5.4.3 Management Commitment:

Aaby & Slater (1989) reported a strong positive relationship between management commitment and the propensity to export, indicating that resource allocation had been linked to performance (Cavusgil & Nevin, 1981; Gronhaug & Lorenzen, 1982).

Commitment has been linked to the exporter/non-exporter dichotomy (Daniels & Robles, 1982; Cavusgil & Naor, 1987; Chetty & Hamilton, 1993), company level performance (Beamish & Munro, 1987; Beamish, Craig & McLellan, 1993) and, product level performance (Cavusgil & Kirpalani, 1993).

Johansson & Vahlne (1977) linked resource specificity and market commitment and suggested that resource commitment decisions are made in small incremental steps. Bauerschmidt, Sullivan & Gillespie (1985) found that a lack of resource commitment was a barrier to exporting. More recently, commitment to relationship-specific investments has been linked to relationship commitment (Ganesan, 1994).

2.2.5.4.3 Management Perceptions:

Aaby & Slater (1989) identified thirty-three studies evaluating management perception associations with domestic and international markets, concluding that it "appears to be one of the most important firm determinants for export success" (p. 17). They identified research associated with perceptions toward: financial incentives; competition; market potential; distribution, delivery & service; government incentives; risk; and, profit.

Subsequent research added perceptions regarding export problems/barriers (Kau & Tan, 1989; Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994; Caughey & Chetty, 1994; Chetty, 1994), excess

capacity (Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994); customer relationships (Axinn, Sinkula & Thach, 1994), sales/sales growth (Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994; Bijmolt & Zwart, 1994; Caughey & Chetty, 1994), costs (Simpson & Kujawa, 1974), and marketing activities (Kau & Tan, 1989).

Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of beliefs, behaviours and export intentions of smaller firms, examining beliefs about observability, comparability, ROI, and product advantage (all significant) and, trialability, complexity and profitability (not significant).

2.2.6 Export Research Focus:

The extant literature indicates a broad base of research which provides valuable information on how exporting commences and grows, the people associated with export activity, the export firm characteristics, the strategies utilised, and the role of government support. While the base may appear broad, the research has concentrated within a narrow focus of export-related variables.

Table 2.2 shows a chronological summary of 180 empirical studies in exporting, classified by the focus adopted by the researchers and the research design, plus 37 theoretical articles (see Appendix 1 & 4 for details).

Table 2.2: Export Literature Summary										
Period	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH									THEORETICAL ARTICLES
	Number of Studies	Research Focus				Research Methods				
		Exporter Only	Importer Only	Unmatched Groups	Dyads	Mail (Phone) Survey	Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	
Pre 1980	12	12	0	0	0	7	4	1	0	2
1980 ~ 1984	39	33	1	2	3	19	13	3	4	5
1985 ~ 1989	49	44	2	1	2	31	12	4	2	10
1990 ~ 1994	61	55	2	3	1	36	14	7	4	13
1995 ~ ...	19	17	0	1	1	15	1	0	3	7
Total	180	161	5	7	7	108	44	15	13	37
		89%	3%	4%	4%	60%	25%	8%	7%	

It is not possible to claim that the bibliographic work which led to this summary has located all published articles in each period, particularly in the most recent times after 1995. However, I am confident that the analysis is based on a large sample of available works and does provide an accurate indication of the structure of the applied literature on exporting.

This summary confirms that the vast majority of studies have been confined to exporters only (89%), with relatively few studies adopting the importer view (3%), importers and exporters (4%), and a dyadic approach (4%). Where the focus has been on the exporter-importer dyad (Ford & Rosson, 1982; Rosson & Ford, 1982; Rosson, 1984; Leonidou, 1989a, 1989b; Havila & Sandström, 1993; Johnson, Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi, 1996) the research has concentrated on export behaviour and performance within established relationships.

Almost two-thirds of the studies utilised mail (or telephone) questionnaires as the main, and in most cases only, research instrument. An additional twenty-five percent gathered questionnaire information as part of a personal interview process, sometimes conducting hundreds of interviews to achieve a sufficient sample size. These are entirely appropriate research tools when the purpose of the study is to reach a large number of respondents, while gathering quantitative data from each one for analysis, and the simplicity of this method helps to explain its frequent use. However it would appear that export research has developed a reliance on this approach.

A case study approach was utilised in 15 studies (8%) within this summary, with an increasing trend over the completed 5-year periods. As a source of 'rich data' about why dyads act and decide in certain ways the case study provides an appropriate design for exploratory research. It appears to be under-utilised in the export literature.

The 180 empirical studies were categorised based on the themes within the research framework (Figure 2.1) utilised in this chapter and this categorisation is summarised in Table 2.3. This analysis reveals that a vast majority of the studies focus on 'internal influences' on exporting (95% overall).

Table 2.3: Export Themes Researched												
Period	Number of Studies	Public Policy	Non-Exporters	Discontinued Exporters	Internationalisation			Internal Influences				
					Export Stages	Export Initiation	Psychic/Geo. Distance	Decision-Maker Char.	Strategy	Competencies	Firm Characteristics	Overall Internal Influences
Pre 1980	12	3	2	0	3	4	0	4	5	6	11	11
1980 ~ 1984	39	11	2	0	5	11	0	8	28	32	31	38
1985 ~ 1989	49	14	2	1	4	7	3	10	40	36	40	48
1990 ~ 1994	61	7	0	0	7	4	7	20	43	43	53	57
1995 ~ ...	19	4	0	0	5	1	3	5	11	12	15	17
Total	180	39	6	1	24	27	13	47	127	129	150	171
		22%	3%	< 1%	13%	15%	7%	26%	71%	72%	83%	95%
												42%

Within internal influences, firm characteristics are studied most frequently (83%), closely followed by competencies (72%) and strategy (71%). There is a large gap to decision-maker characteristics (26%), which is the next most frequent category of studies, confirming internal influences as the most studied theme in the export literature.

Beyond internal influences there is infrequent inclusion of public policy variables (22%), export initiation (15%) and export stages (13%). The very low frequency of non-exporters (3%) and discontinued exporters (< 1%) should raise concern given that there is valuable information to be gained from these sources. This gap in the export research literature should be addressed, even though there are obvious difficulties associated with obtaining accurate information from discontinued exporters.

The 'other' category includes a multitude of variables investigated on an infrequent basis. Collectively they may appear large (42%) however the frequency of any one variable is very low.

It is not the intention of this summary to criticise the extant literature as it is entirely appropriate to include variables related to the export firm within export research. However, as this summary reveals, the combination of an exporter only focus (89%), and a survey-based research design (85% collectively) as the predominant form of export research may present only limited aspects of the export process and more importantly, limiting our understanding to only one side of the dynamics of the marketing process between exporters and importers as they establish, develop and

maintain export relationships. When considered with the overwhelming focus on internal influences on exporting (95%), our export knowledge begins to be constrained by our own research design.

Theoretical export articles are comparatively few in number, indicating a maturity within the current research area. The theoretical topics tend to deepen existing knowledge and do not expand the scope of the domain of exporting. The exception is a recent article by Liang and Parkhe (1997) which criticises the exporter-only focus of the literature and proposes a dyadic search and selection process which requires active importer participation and a dynamic process of mutual search and selection to initiate export activity. This article is in stark contrast to the majority of export literature and philosophically more consistent with the research objectives in this study.

2.3 Other Relevant Research:

The research objective of understanding the exporter-importer relationship requires a broader perspective than that provided by the extant export literature. Therefore, export relationships are now reviewed in the context of the relationship marketing literature which has emerged over the last fifteen years. Although this study is not driven by relationship marketing questions, the findings within the relationship marketing paradigm are relevant to the export relationship which are included within this research.

Other empirical research which relates to this study, particularly related to supplier selection decisions, are also included within this section. The supplier selection research is related to the importer decision making process within the dyad, which is part of this study.

2.3.1 Export Relationships:

The term 'relationship marketing' was coined by Leonard Berry in 1983 and has been embraced by many marketing academics. The study of relationships from a marketing perspective has generated approximately 80 theoretical and over 100 empirical articles in the last fifteen years. Many researchers (Grönroos, 1994; Gummerson, 1994; Sheth

and Pravatiyer, 1995) propose relationship marketing as a new paradigm, replacing the marketing mix as the preferred approach to effective marketing.

Table 2.4 shows a chronological summary of 117 empirical studies and 79 theoretical articles on relationship marketing, classified by the focus adopted by the researchers and the research design (see Appendix 2 for details). Once again, it is not possible to claim that the bibliographic work which led to this summary has located all published articles in each period, particularly in the most recent times after 1995. Again, I am confident that the analysis is based on a large sample of available works and provides an accurate indication of the structure of applied literature on relationship marketing.

Table 2.4: Relationship Marketing Literature Summary										
Period	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH									THEORETICAL
	Number of Studies	Research Focus				Research Methods				
		Seller Only	Buyer Only	Unmatched Groups	Dyads	Mail (Phone) Survey	Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	
Pre 1980	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
1980 ~ 1984	5	0	3	0	3	3	1	1	0	3
1985 ~ 1989	18	6	5	1	5	5	9	3	1	9
1990 ~ 1994	38	4	18	6	10	26	7	4	1	29
1995 ~ ...	56	10	31	4	10	32	7	11	5	35
Total	117	20 17%	57 49%	11 10%	27 24%	66 57%	24 21%	19 16%	7 6%	79

Although the term ‘relationship marketing’ was coined in 1983, the principles commenced prior to this date and this is reflected in the earlier theoretical articles in the table. Relationship marketing research continues to grow, showing a strong increase in all periods, for example, the latest three-and-a-half years produced as many research articles as the previous ten years combined.

In contrast to the export literature, the relationship marketing literature has focused on the buyer perspective (49%) and dyads (24%), rather than the seller (17%). Questionnaires (mail/phone, 57%; interview, 21%) continue to dominate the research design with case studies gaining momentum in the last few years.

Theoretical articles continue to increase in number and scope as theorists expand the known boundaries and reshape our understanding of relationship marketing. These

articles portray an active research area which is still evolving; again a contrast to the mature export literature.

A wide range of relationship marketing variables have been researched (Table 2.5) indicating the broad range and developmental status of the research. To date relationship marketing research has focused on: trust; cooperation and interaction; structural bonds and dependence; satisfaction; relationship duration; commitment; conflict; power, influence and control; and, communication. Many of these constructs have been adopted from other academic disciplines and had relationship marketing theory applied to them.

Table 2.5: Relationship Marketing Variables Researched																			
Period	Number of Studies	Trust	Cooperation/Interaction	Structural Bonds/Dependence	Satisfaction	Duration of Relationship	Commitment	Conflict	Power, Influence & Control	Communication	Relationship Development	Relationship Quality	Dyadic Relationships	Relational Norms	Interpersonal Relationships	Expectations	Relationship Status/Stages	Relationship Maintenance	Other
Pre 1980	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1980 ~ 1984	5	0	5	1	2	0	2	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	3
1985 ~ 1989	18	2	6	4	5	2	2	6	9	4	5	1	3	0	3	1	1	2	7
1990 ~ 1994	38	13	13	14	13	14	7	10	11	9	5	5	6	2	1	4	2	1	30
1995 ~ ...	56	24	13	18	17	20	21	13	9	17	6	9	4	7	3	1	1	1	51
Total	117	39	37	37	37	36	32	32	31	30	17	15	14	9	9	6	5	4	91
		33%	32%	32%	32%	31%	27%	27%	26%	26%	15%	13%	12%	8%	8%	5%	4%	3%	78%

The large number of ‘other’ variables (91 articles, 78%) indicates a wide ranging research agenda, reflected in a trend towards more variables within each study since 1996. New variables continue to be included in relationship marketing studies as researchers seek to understand this new paradigm.

2.3.2 Other Related Research:

The research questions behind this study are broad in scope, necessitating reference to other published articles outside the two literature streams already summarised. This set

of articles is eclectic and is included as they have influenced the design and performance of the research. A summary of the articles is provided in Appendix 3.

The largest subset of articles relate to supplier selection decisions reported in Chapter 4 of this study and they were instrumental in the compilation of the supplier selection attributes used to measure the common understanding between the exporter and importer. Cross-cultural research studies were reviewed to understand acceptable norms for international research, improving the design and execution of this study. Selected 'channel' literature was reviewed to provide background on the dynamics of marketing channels, and provide questions which may prompt a deeper understanding of international distribution channels. Articles on specific Japanese marketing characteristics or Japanese versus US comparisons were reviewed to highlight further areas for additional interview questions. Finally, specific articles related to marketing agricultural or clothing products and published New Zealand government reports in these areas were reviewed to indicate past or future areas of concern or opportunity.

2.4 Review of Selected Articles:

The research included in this report is anchored in the export literature and draws heavily on relationship marketing and other studies. The breadth of the research literature precluded a detailed review of all related articles, however selected publications are included here to provide background on closely related work. The first part of this section includes export publications, followed by more recent relationship marketing work.

Marr (1984), in a study focussed on customer service aspects of supplier selection criteria, calculated utility values for unmatched exporters and importers, revealing the sensitivity of importers to changes in exporter service levels. He concluded "that exporters' perceptions differ quite significantly to those of prospective customers" (p. 21), and "different prospective markets have different perceptions about the utility of individual components of customer service" (pp. 21~22). Additional analysis of these utility values (Marr, 1987) found that "exporters will have to drastically adjust their views of the utilities generated by some factors if they are to provide a package offering maximum customer satisfaction" (p. 51). He concluded that asking the right service

requirement questions of prospective customers can assist exporters avoid “getting off on the wrong foot” (p. 53).

In a study of 17 Cypriot-UK, exporter-importer dyads Leonidou (1989a) found that both parties perceive the importer to have the greater influence on decision making related to process and marketing mix activities of the exporter. Conflict was perceived to be minimal and cooperation high, resulting in high satisfaction within the dyads. In a second article utilising the same data Leonidou (1989b) used a different context and statistical test to confirm the previous findings.

In a dyadic study of Greek manufacturing exporters and British importers Katsikeas and Piercy (1991) found low levels of conflict, primarily due to the clear roles for dyad parties and the presence of Greek importers in Britain. Price was the primary source of conflict, with other activities showing no systematic direction where perceptual differences occurred.

Morgan and Sarris (1991) examined the failure of Cypriot wines to penetrate the UK market, finding the primary reason for low imports was a lack of consumer awareness. They recommended a greater, coordinated promotional effort, supported by consistency with UK tastes, and a lower relative purchase price. They also found that if these strategic marketing mix changes were made, 50% of UK importers would review their purchasing policies.

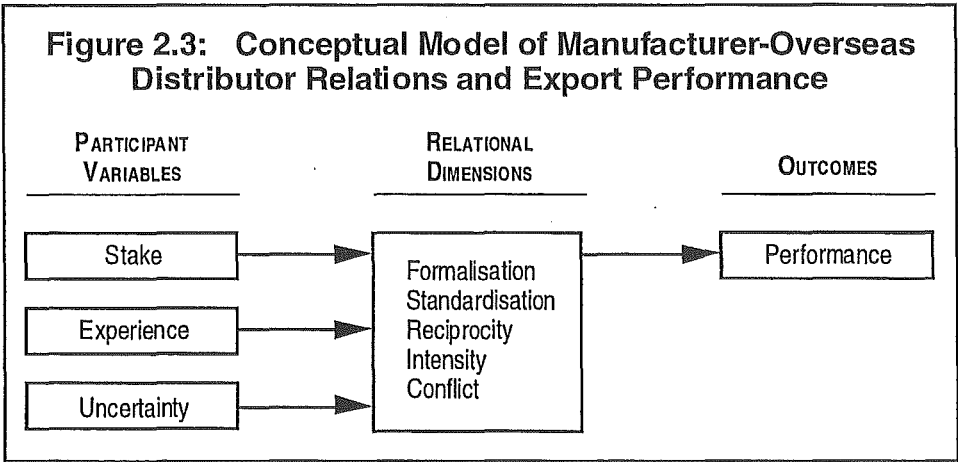
Llanes & Melgar (1993), reporting from a series of three studies on behavioural aspects of exporter (Philippines) to importer (Asia, Europe, USA, Australia) channels, revealed that a short-term orientation and low trustworthiness were impediments to Philippine export relationship development, even though there was a cooperative and supportive environment. The Philippine exporters were rated low on aggressiveness but their adaptability was perceived as a strength. Importers held the relationship power and exporters were aware of the potential for conflict based on previous responses from foreign buyers.

In a pilot study of unmatched New Zealand exporters and Australian importers, Chaney & Goddard (1996) tested for differences in perceptions of what is important to the importer for New Zealand-Australia export relationships, including financial considerations (6 factors), communications (11 factors) and management and training (7 factors). Eleven of the twenty-four measures (42%) had similar exporter-importer

importance ratings, indicating a fairly high level of agreement between respondents. Of the thirteen responses with significant differences, the exporter over-rated the importance of two (regular and frequent visits; goals given to the distributor to achieve) and under-rated the importance to the importer of the other eleven (42% of all factors).

Two themes emerge from the above eight studies: first, the difference in perception between the exporter and importer; and second, the dominant role played by the importer in export relationships.

The earliest and perhaps most relevant research article is the seminal work by Rosson & Ford (1982) involving 21 Canadian exporting manufacturers and their UK distributors (importers), in matched dyadic relationships. This study tested a conceptual exporter-importer relationship model (Figure 2.3) using data gathered during personal interviews and a small questionnaire. This research was unusual in that the unit of analysis was the relationship, predating the ‘relationship marketing’ phenomenon.



Rosson & Ford found that stake (the importance of the relationship) was positively related to intensity and negatively to reciprocity. Experience, measured by number of overseas contacts, is positively related to intensity. Experience, measured by years of contact, is positively related to formalisation and reciprocity, while being negatively related to standardisation, intensity and conflict. Uncertainty is positively related to formalisation, standardisation, visit frequency (intensity) and conflict, and negatively associated with reciprocity and effort extended (intensity). The variation in positive and negative associations emphasises the importance of variable measurement to the findings.

For relationship dimensions, formalisation was not significantly related to either performance measures, standardisation is negatively related to sales in the destination market, and conflict is negatively associated with sales growth. Intensity has the strongest result, with three (of seven) measures (number of letters; stock carried; effort expended) positively associated with sales growth and the first two related to sales level in the destination market.

Rosson & Ford found that “high performance is associated with certain manufacturer-distributor relationship characteristics” and “the most successful dyads appear to be those where the two parties are prepared to adapt their roles and routines and display a commitment to developing business in the market in question” (p. 70).

These findings are confirmed and extended by Ford & Rosson (1982) who analysed the same data from the perspective of relationship development states. They found that:

- relationship dimension characteristics vary by development state;
- four of the six relationships in the 2~5 year category were troubled;
- relationships may become static at any time;
- relationship development is not necessarily orderly or progressive over time; and,
- growing state dyads show more commitment to exporting/importing and to the arrangement they are currently involved in.

Ford & Rosson chose to use the term ‘relationship development state’, not ‘relationship development stage’ to emphasise the “condition” rather than the “step or period of development”³, thus avoiding the life-cycle process implicit in the later relationship stage models.

Additional analysis of four case histories was conducted by Rosson (1984). This analysis highlighted the differences between successful and troubled relationships to provide guidance to manufacturers seeking to establish and build for success. Commitment to exporting is critical, supported by a long-term focus, flexibility and joint participation, cooperation, frequent interaction, resource exchange, and mutually beneficial solutions.

³ Collins English Dictionary, Third Edition (Updated), 1994, Harper-Collins Publishers, Great Britain.

In a follow-up study, manufacturers from the original dyads (1978-1980 data collection) were telephone interviewed in 1985 to determine the changes in their exporting arrangements. Sixteen manufacturers reported changes, including modified interaction due to changes (poor performance) in sales (6 dyads), manufacturer changes due to closure or ownership change (5 dyads), and environmental (exchange rates; markets) changes (5 dyads).

Eleven relationships (52%) ended in termination, three became inert, five became static, one remained static, and one moved from new to growing. Four of the terminations were due to closure or withdrawal from the market and seven resulted in alternate export arrangements: another distributor (2); own sales agent (2); direct sales from exporting country (1); and, own sales network in destination country (2).

In the only other study of relationships in an exporter-importer context, Moore (1991) examined relationship states (Ford & Rosson model, 1982) focusing on time, experience and relationship state aspects of exporting (81 UK exporters) and importing (59 German importers). He reported three categories of new relationships (completely new, added, replaced) and that the majority of relationships were in a growing state.

Other empirical articles on relationship marketing, outside the exporter-importer context which have utilised both buyer and seller data, and are related to the research findings in this study are summarised to provide a more detailed picture of the relevant extant literature.

In a study of fresh produce retailer-supplier relationships Knox & White (1991) found that: there were similarities, but discrepancies, in perception of relationship stage; there were no contractual agreements; multiple supply sources were utilised; communication is fundamental to the relationship process; tonnage increases as the relationship develops; and, the average relationship was 8 years old.

Anderson & Narus (1990) explored the path of influence among relationship constructs using structural equation modelling on data from a questionnaire to distributors and their manufacturers (suppliers). Associations between relationship constructs which were found to be 'core' across multiple models were that distributors and manufacturing firms share similar perspectives on:

- the positive effect of relative dependence on influence by the partner firm;
- the positive effect of outcomes given comparison level of cooperation;
- the positive correlation between communication and outcomes given comparison levels;
- the positive effect of communication on cooperation; and,
- the positive effect of cooperation on trust.

Trust was found to be a core construct in the relationship model.

Heide and John (1992) used the transaction-specific asset (TSA) aspects of transaction cost analysis and measured the buyers' control over decisions in the presence of 'norms' for economic exchange (relationship norms). Three relationship norms of flexibility, information exchange and solidarity were combined as a single relationship norm variable in estimating buyer control. On its own, it was not found to be significant, however when combined with TSA it was positive and significantly related to buyer control. Independently, TSA had a negative significant effect, negating the transaction cost analysis concept that TSA predicates safeguards (control) for the investing party. TSA only had a positive influence in the presence of relational norms.

In a follow-up article using the same data, Heide (1994) used flexibility to measure forms of relationship governance, finding that when one party is dependent it undermines flexibility, but when there is symmetry of dependence this promotes flexibility. Heide also found that automation of manufacturing has a negative effect on flexibility, while a customised product and increasing volume promote flexibility. Length of relationship had no significant effect.

Strategies for influencing channel members' behaviour were researched in two studies by Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux & Simpson (1992). They examined the effect of different influence strategies on relationalism (interdependent partners in relational structures), finding all were statistically significant, with a positive effect from recommendations, information exchange and promises, and a negative effect from requests, legalistic pleas and threats.

Johnson, Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi (1996) examined trust and integration in non-equity, Japanese-US cooperative alliances using data from 98 dyads. Neither partner similarity nor complementarity had a significant effect on trust, but cultural sensitivity

predicted increased trust in the dyad partner. Reciprocal trust was greater for the Japanese than for the US. They also found that a firms' trust in a partner is crucial for strategic integration.

In a study of commercial aircraft engine buyers and sellers Metcalf, Frear & Krishnan (1990) found that:

- information and social exchange predict cooperation;
- cooperation predicts willingness to adapt;
- perception of product importance predicts adaptation; and,
- information exchange positively influences adaptation.

They concluded that successful management of these interaction processes strengthen links between customers and vendors, resulting in maximisation of resources of both firms.

In an article which is primarily theoretical, Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson (1994) argue for the study of dyadic business relationships within the context of a network. They surveyed 24 Swedish business managers and identified seven business network constructs: network identity; anticipated constructive effects on network identity; anticipated deleterious effects on network identity; outcomes given comparison level; outcomes given comparison level of alternatives; cooperation; and, relationship commitment. Their emphasis was network implication, with only cooperation and commitment related to within-dyad relationships.

2.5 Summary:

The research questions addressed by this research are grounded in exporting, but encompass relationship marketing and some purchasing literature. Therefore the scope of this literature review has been broad, with the large volume of published articles necessitating a summarisation process to understand the focus of the extant literature, prior to a more detailed review of a few selected articles.

The export literature is presented as extensive, but narrowly focussed. The typical export article gathers data from exporters only, using a survey methodology and asks

questions related to factors within the exporting company which influence export decisions, perceptions or performance. While valuable knowledge has been gained from this approach, its narrow focus limits its future growth and the value of the contribution to 'the body of knowledge'.

Export marketing researchers should adopt the customer-focus of basic marketing philosophy and rediscover the wider foundations of exporting. This approach will open new research opportunities which will challenge researchers for many years. This study is positioned in this wider export context, incorporating both marketer and customer within the research design.

The seminal work of Rosson & Ford (1982) is probably closest to the concept of this research and it is difficult to understand why their promising work has not been continued over the intervening years⁴. A number of two-country, exporter-importer studies have improved our understanding of exporting (Marr, 1994, 1997; Leonidou, 1989a, 1989b; Katsikeas & Piercy, 1991; Morgan & Sarris, 1991; Chaney & Goddard, 1996) however their focus has been on the effectiveness of exporter-related decisions and how the exporter can improve their performance.

Overall, analysis of the relationship marketing literature reveals an active, expanding, growing research stream which has many sub-topics to investigate over the next few years. Relationship marketing research is typically buyer-driven, but also incorporates sellers and dyads. Surveys remain the preferred data gathering approach, however this methodology implies a clear understanding of the discipline and research concepts being investigated, an idea which may be questioned given the early stage of this research area. Theoretical articles continue to explore the boundaries of relationship marketing, while probing and deepening the constructs already identified. The recent increase in case study research indicates an awareness of the value of in-depth research into a topic which is complex and can be very personal to those involved.

Analysis of research variables indicates a concentration on nine separate, but related, constructs with many new variables being introduced each year. Those relationship marketing constructs receiving frequent attention include: trust; cooperation and

4 In a discussion with Professor Rosson he indicated that cost was the major reason he had not continued with dyadic international research.

interaction; structural bonds or dependence; satisfaction; duration of relationships; commitment; conflict; power, influence and control; and, communication.

Relationship marketing research is primarily domestic and driven by research questions derived from theory based on disciplines outside marketing. To date there appears to be no case-derived development of relationship marketing theory from within the marketing discipline. Developing theory from the experience of people involved in the practice of relationship marketing is a valuable complement to other forms of theory development, but one which has yet to be utilised. The very 'newness' of relationship marketing makes it well suited to a case study derived theory development approach (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The research outlined in this report falls within the under-researched domain of multiple-country, dyadic research using a case study methodology, designed to understand the dynamics of exporter-importer relationship initiation and development. It encompasses the criteria which influence the decision to initiate a relationship, dyad partner perceptions of those criteria, factors influencing relationship development and relationship quality, plus the gaps in understanding between dyad partners regarding those factors.

Perhaps most importantly, this research presents new ideas applicable to both exporting and relationship marketing which are derived from the experts involved in international business -- the exporters and importers whose very livelihood is dependent on their ability to initiate and foster international exchange relationships.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Chapter Outline

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Case Study Research

3.3 Multiple Case Study Methodology

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Validity Check

3.4.2 Define & Design

3.4.3 Prepare & Collect Data

3.4.4 Analysis

Chapter 3: Research Methods

3.1 Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to provide sufficient methodological background to allow research replication and provide a clear understanding of the research foundations as a platform for valid conclusions and appropriate generalisation of findings. In this context the research methods are the skeleton which provides direction and structure to the research process. Research methods relevant to the overall design are included in this chapter, while methodological details specific to a chapter or piece of analysis precedes the reported results within that chapter.

This chapter includes a summary of the ongoing debate within case study research as they relate to the context of this research, followed by an overview of Yin's (1994) multiple case study methodology, research design, data analysis (qualitative and quantitative), and the logic supporting the research design decisions.

3.2 Case Study Research:

Within qualitative research there are ongoing methodological debates which are influencing our approach to case study research. The decision to employ a single versus a multiple case study method (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Eisenhardt, 1989) cannot be resolved without understanding the purpose of the research (Yin, 1994) and where it fits on the inductive-deductive continuum (Perry & Coote, 1994).

Single case studies provide a deep, rich understanding of that specific context and may provide 'paradigm changing' theories for further testing (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). Advocates of multiple case study approaches cite its theory building validity (Eisenhardt, 1989) and ability to combine qualitative and quantitative analysis (Jick, 1981; Romano, 1989; Eisenhardt, 1989). Larsson (1993) strongly supports an across-study 'case survey' methodology, however, Yin (1981) argues against the case survey, preferring the within study 'case comparison' approach used in a multiple case study.

Each approach has strengths and weaknesses. If the focus of the research is on building theory from an environment (organisation) without predetermining the 'critical question', inductive approaches (eg.: grounded theory, Glasser & Strauss, 1967) are appropriate. In more focussed research, based on research questions, a more deductive approach is utilised and multiple case studies may be appropriate (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This research is based on specific research questions, implying a deductive research approach. The desire to explain current business practices (how, why) requires a case study approach, while the comparative (across-case) analysis requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, indicating a multiple case study approach using case comparisons (Yin, 1994).

Thus, the nature of the research questions led to a multiple case study method using qualitative and quantitative methods. The inadequacy of a purely quantitative approach is analogous to one importers response on relationships:

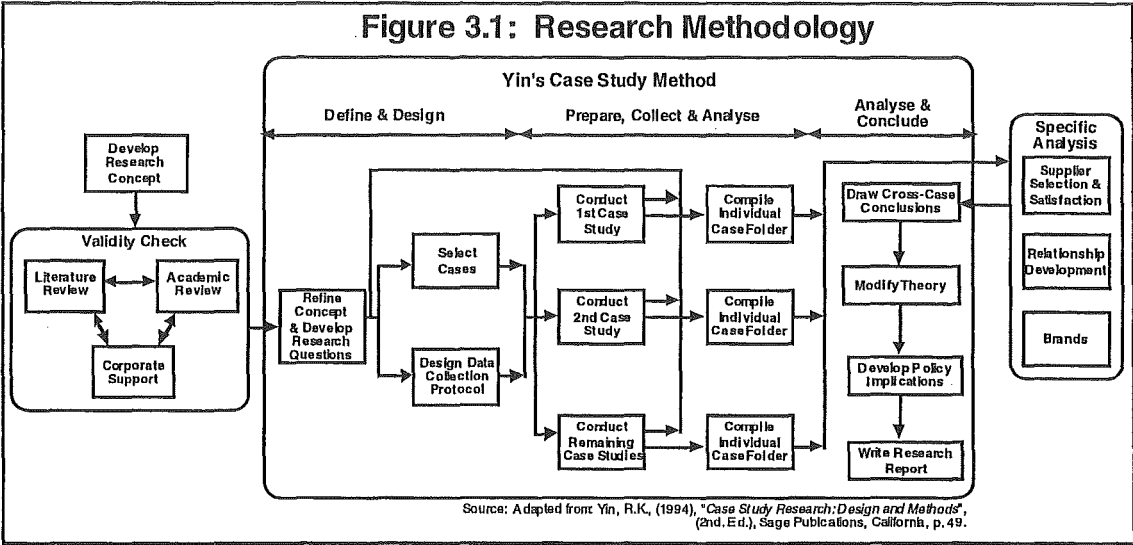
“(there are) differences between numbers and the interpersonal relationship. If the company only looks at the figures, you cannot have a good relationship.”

The dynamics of relationship development requires qualitative analysis to ensure adequate breadth and depth of enquiry. Comparability is supplemented by the gathering of quantitative data within the interview.

3.3 Multiple Case Study Methodology:

This research utilises Yin's (1994) multiple case study methodology, adapted as appropriate to the context of this research (Figure 3.1). Additional 'front-end' conceptual and validity tasks were added to translate and refine the experience-based concept into an appropriate academic enquiry which had sufficient structure and substance.

The additional analysis (right side of the model) was to answer specific research questions (supplier selection & satisfaction; relationship development) and analysis related to an unanticipated area of difference (brands).



This study was designed to identify the foreign buyers' perception of the company as a supplier and business partner, and to identify the variables used by the buyer in their decision-making process. The empirical data was to be gathered through personal interviews at the buyer's location and by questionnaire. The exporter interviews would provide a basis for identification of differences in perceptions within the relationship.

The research was originally structured as follows:

Destination markets	Australia, US, Japan	
Consumer products	4 specific export products	(a, b, c, d)
Industrial products	4 specific export products	(w, x, y, z)
Companies	10 companies for each product	
Sample size	Minimum cell size	$m_{ij} = 10$,
therefore	Minimum total sample	$m = 80$

The availability of export companies combined with budget restrictions required a downsizing of the original design to include one consumer and one industrial product exported to all three destination markets. The unanimous rejection of a questionnaire to gather data from exporters and their customers during initial discussions with exporters reinforced the personal interview format adopted for this study and led to an embedded survey, multiple case study design. The number of companies targeted per product and market was reduced to six to enable us to conduct the personal interviews within the available budget.

3.4.1 Validity Check:

The concept for the research, gaps in international business understanding and their influence on New Zealand exporters, was refined and validated through three channels. First, a preliminary review of the exporting literature revealed minimal dyadic research and a need to develop a wider perspective of the export process, including both exporter and importer in the research design (Liang & Parkhe, 1997).

The void of published articles with a dyadic, multi-country, export focus supported the originality of the research proposal, which was accepted in August, 1994 as valid

research for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) at the University of Canterbury. The acceptance providing academic validation for the research.

The third and perhaps greatest challenge was to discuss the concept with industry advisory bodies and exporting companies to gauge the level of support and access to confidential customer and financial information. The chief executive or export manager (or equivalent) of companies representing the following industries were interviewed: seafood, outdoor apparel, kitchen appliances, household furniture, sheepskin products, honey, ice cream, and, telecommunications equipment. The exporters all said that they would not provide customer information if data was to be gathered by mail survey as they did not want their customers to receive questionnaires through the post. They accepted the concept of personal interviews and most supported providing customer information and introductions for these interviews. Also, there appeared to be no difficulty obtaining financial and customer-level data in conjunction with the interviews.

The three-pronged validation process provided valuable guidance to modify and refine the research concept and defining the research questions, while verifying their validity for academic enquiry.

3.4.2 Define & Design:

The research questions (see Introduction, Section 1.1) developed and refined during research concept validation were formalised prior to finalising the research design. The unit of measure was defined as the exporter-importer dyad, which constitutes an individual case study under Yin's (1994) research methodology.

Case selection was dependent on the destination market and industry. The destination markets were selected based on New Zealand's major export markets and potential geographic/psychic distances for New Zealand exporters. The selected markets, Australia, Japan and the USA, represent 52% of exports (Statistics New Zealand, 1994) and are the three largest individual country markets. With the exception of the European Union, no other market is larger than 5% of annual exports.

Fourteen industries were considered for inclusion within this research and industry participants and advisers were contacted as part of the review process. Industry selection was based on export statistics and recommendations from the New Zealand Trade Development Board, The Canterbury Manufacturers Association, and the New Zealand Horticulture Export Authority.

Outdoor apparel was selected as a consumer product exported to all three markets and providing various products with varying levels of export success (sales volume). This industry group was interpreted broadly to ensure availability of sufficient exporting company participants to provide multiple sources for comparison purposes. Products in the final outdoor apparel sample included woollen sweaters, woollen jackets and bush-shirts, sports jerseys (e.g.: rugby shirts) and hats.

Horticulture and seafood were the final industrial product industries. Seafood was eliminated due to a quota system restricting supply and the industry's dependence on fish markets and auctions at the destination country. The commodity/bidding process inherent in the fish market was not considered conducive to the relationship focus of this research. The horticulture industry was chosen as a broad based industrial product group exported to all three markets, with many exporters and a variety of export structures and approaches. The New Zealand Horticulture Export Authority actively supported the research and encouraged exporters to participate, providing an independent source of credibility for the study. Products sold through 'single-desk' sellers were excluded as these export structures did not provide an export relationship choice to the importer. Horticulture products included in the study were fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, and processed vegetables.

A list of candidate companies was compiled with assistance from export advisory groups (from publicly available data) and through recommendations/referrals within the industry. A short-list of target companies exporting to multiple research markets was compiled and contacted. Ten outdoor apparel exporters were contacted, yielding eight initial interviews and four confirmed research participants (40% participation level). Eight horticulture exporters were contacted, yielding seven interviews and five research participants (62.5% participation). The higher participation from the horticulture industry reflects the better prescreening and research support from the Horticulture Export Authority. The companies that did not participate did not have time, envisaged no benefits, or did not meet the screening criteria.

Overseas importers (dyad partners) were selected by the exporters, with regard to research objectives and selection guidelines (varying length of relationship; strong and unstable relationships). The number of customers selected varied by exporter and market served, but fell within the range of two to seven. This yielded thirty-six importer interviews (plus two which were unable to be finalised). The importers selected were not geographically constrained within each country. The number of dyads participating in this research are summarised in Table 3.1. To protect the confidentiality of participating exporters and importers and their relationships, all companies are referred to by a code number in this report. Participating companies are listed in Appendix 7.

Table 3.1: Exporter-Importer Dyads by Product Type and Country				
Product Type	Importing Country			Total
	Australia	USA	Japan	
Outdoor Apparel:				
Number of dyads	6	5	3	14
Importer size range (employees)	[1 ~ 280]	[2 ~ 1,400]	[16 ~ 463]	
Horticulture:				
Number of dyads	8	4	10	22
Importer size range (employees)	[8 ~ 60,000]	[13 ~ 150]	[14 ~ 34,103]	

Data collection was primarily through personal interview at the exporters’ location in New Zealand and importers’ office in Australia, the US and Japan. This was supplemented by financial data, customer information, export promotion materials and company background information. Personal interviews were semi-structured, utilising a mirror questionnaire (Appendix 5) with standardised questions. The interview process allowed the flexibility to expand the discussion based on the interviewee’s responses.

The questionnaire included an embedded survey to provide scaled responses for key exporter-importer dyad creation decisions (supplier selection, satisfaction, relationship strength) and allow across-case comparability. The survey used a six-point, forced choice, Likert-type scale to avoid potential central tendency distortions caused by a tendency for Japanese respondents to select the centre rating rather than disclose an attitude. A ‘not applicable’ option was available on all scale items. Interviewees were

provided with a 'prompt sheet' listing the scale items and the meaning of the 6-point scale end points (Appendix 5). The context of the response (specific dyad versus general response) was explained prior to each section proceeding. The utilisation of qualitative and quantitative techniques within a multiple case study design was advocated by Jick (1981) and Romano (1989) to improve triangulation and thus, the validity of the results.

The survey was followed by open-ended questions, rephrased as appropriate for the dyad partner. Additional questions were asked of importers based on exporter responses to the initial questions, and to take advantage of the unique opportunity to gain access to importers matched to specific New Zealand exporters.

3.4.3 Prepare & Collect Data:

The approach to overseas companies varied by market. For Australia and the US each corresponding exporting company contacted their customer to advise them of the research and request their participation. The researcher then contacted the companies by letter and follow-up phone call requesting participation and scheduled the interview. New Zealand, Australia and US-based interviews were taped and a copy of the transcript forwarded to the interviewee for their review and confirmation. A handwritten summary was prepared during each interview as a back-up⁵ and compared to the transcript. Japanese interviews were not taped for cultural reasons and interviews were summarised during the interview. This summarisation was facilitated by the interpreting delays inherent in the Japanese interviews, as the process required the interpreter to speak in English, then Japanese, listens to the answer, then interpret and respond in English. This response could then be recorded by the interviewer during the delay caused by interpreting and the respondents answer to the next question.

Data gathering in Japan by foreign researchers is challenging. Japanese respondents are wary of foreign researchers due to a lack of exposure to business research and the potential for misunderstanding from interpreting between a high to a low-context language. Japanese business people try to avoid 'losing face' from not being able to

⁵ Two interview tape recordings were faulty and unusable. The interview summaries were used in these instances.

answer questions in areas they are expected to know and also to avoid the researcher 'losing face' by explaining something they think the researcher should already be familiar with. Experience with conducting survey research in Japan⁶ has shown that the Japanese prefer to avoid participating rather than become involved in questionnaires or research-based interviews.

In response to these challenges, participation by Japanese companies was encouraged through a multi-pronged approach:

- The exporters formally introduced the research to their customers and advised that they would be contacted by the researcher.
- A letter of introduction was prepared by the researcher, translated into Japanese and the English letter reworded to reflect Japanese protocol.
- The introductory letter was accompanied by a letter of support (in Japanese) from the New Zealand Trade Representative in Japan (Mr. Eugene Bowen).
- All potential interviewees were contacted by a bilingual Japanese executive assistant, based in Tokyo, who answered questions and finalised the interview schedule.

After considerable discussion with research associates⁷ and recognising the time constraints imposed by interpreting, it was decided to vary the research approach to effectively utilise the time available at the importer interviews. The survey instrument was translated into Japanese and forwarded to the interviewees two weeks prior to the interview. Those surveys not returned prior to the interview received two follow-up phone calls and, if not received, the survey was requested at the interview. One survey was not received and that dyad was not included in the quantitative analysis.

International research frequently requires translation of the survey instrument to a foreign language to ensure the recipient has an accurate understanding and provides appropriate responses. Back translation, the process of translating to a foreign language then using a second party to translate back into the original language, is recommended

⁶ The researcher conducted market research surveys in Japan for foreign companies as part of his consulting activities prior to commencing this research.

⁷ This research was facilitated by associates at AT&T Solutions in Tokyo, who were known to the researcher.

to pinpoint misinterpretations and misunderstandings which may influence the validity of the research. Alternately, parallel translation in an iterative process called 'decentring' may be used.⁸

Japanese is a high context, implicit language. This means that communication "depends heavily on the context or nonverbal aspects of communication"⁹. Thus, there is no direct translation from English to Japanese for many concepts or phrases and the process of back translation will not yield an accurate match to the original. Thus, for this research a variation of the parallel translation approach was used.

The English survey was sent to Japanese research associates and translated by Ms. E. Matsuo (B.A., Mass Communications) who is experienced in working for foreign companies in Japan. The Japanese document was reviewed for clarity of meaning and appropriate wording (Kanji selection) by Dr. E. Tamura, partner-in-charge, AT&T Solutions, Japan. The survey was then reviewed against the original for accuracy of content. During this review process there were extensive phone discussions with the researcher, in Christchurch, to ensure the consistency of the intention of the questions. Throughout the process, great care was taken to ensure that the English and Japanese surveys were functionally and semantically equivalent.

An interpreter attended all interviews in Japan, even though some Japanese executives indicated that they were willing to be interviewed in English. This ensured consistency and allowed for clarification of the question and answers, as necessary. The interpreters all had at least 10 years business experience and were familiar with the terminology inherent in international business.

Research interviews were conducted with exporters in New Zealand between June and August 1995, with overseas interviews conducted in Japan in February 1996, the USA in March 1996 and Australia in April/May 1996. Interviews were conducted at the company premises, included from one to three company executives responsible for exporting or importing, and lasted from two to six hours in duration, per company, with individual interviews ranging from one-and-a-half to three-and-a-half hours. Longer interviews included one or two brief intermissions to avoid interviewee fatigue.

⁸ Cateora, P.R., *International Marketing*, 8th Edition, Irwin, Homewood, IL, 1993, pp. 354-356.

⁹ Ibid., p. 137.

Although it is considered appropriate to visit the interviewee after they have reviewed the interview transcript, to clarify response and understanding, in this study the distances and cost involved precluded this confirmatory visit and reliance was placed on the feedback from the interviewee review of the transcript.

3.4.4 Analysis:

Data analysis consisted of two phases. First, the large volume of interview data was summarised based on the research questions, extracting themes and linkages. The objective of this phase was to develop a case summary identifying key information directly relevant to the research question, without losing the 'essence' of the overall case. This process was assisted by using case analysis folders containing all relevant dyad information.

The second stage was to analyse the data to provide explanations and match theoretical patterns using applicable and valid analytical techniques. The objective of this phase is to address the research questions, provide explanations and raise additional questions for future research.

In the context of case study research "Data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study" (Yin, 1994, p. 102). Although there is general agreement on the need to conduct data analysis, "the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case analysis ... because the strategies and techniques have not been well defined in the past" (Yin, 1994, p. 102).

The analysis approaches in this research are primarily explanation building (importance/satisfaction matrix, relationship development model, trust) and pattern matching (importance ratings, relationship development stages), supported by quantitative techniques (correlations, paired *t*-Tests, regressions) where appropriate.

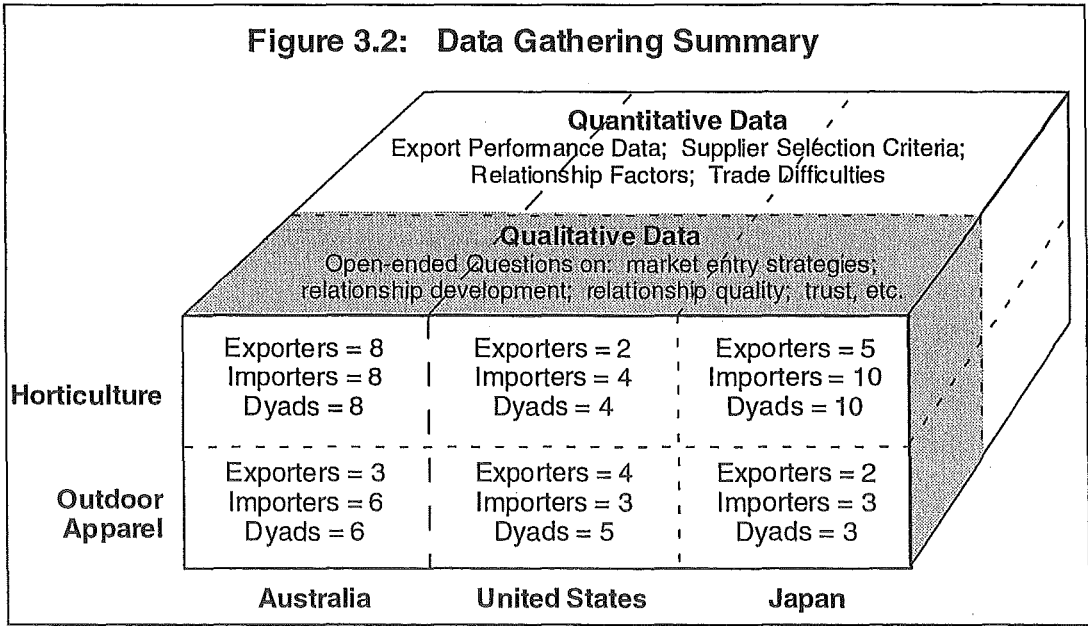
The process of summarising case information is frequently termed 'data reduction'. Miles (1983) defines data reduction as "a form of preliminary analysis which refines, iterates, and revises frameworks, suggesting new leads for further data collection, and

makes data more available for final assembly into case studies and cross-site analysis” (p. 122). Reducing data volumes is not the objective of this process; rather it is a by-product of the distillation of the data to address the research questions.

The dyadic nature of this research required simultaneous analysis of the exporter and importer information. This was facilitated by reducing transcripts onto landscape-format pages with interviewee responses opposite each other. Individual response and across transcript (within dyad) analysis was performed on this basis.

The richness of the individual case analysis provided a wealth of ideas for comparison across cases, however this analysis has been limited to the research questions addressed within this study. Within-case analysis was primarily qualitative, although a financial summary and the survey statistics (and gaps) were calculated at a case level for categorisation and later across-case analysis.

The across-case analysis had three components: the across-case analysis of qualitative data resulting from the data summarisation process; the quantitative analysis of embedded units (survey data); and finally, the re-examination of qualitative data to provide additional explanatory power for the quantitative results. The data gathered during the interviews, shown schematically in Figure 3.2, was used during this analysis.



Customer level sales growth has been used as a measure of dyadic performance rather than the more frequently used export intensity and/or export sales growth. The use of

these aggregate measures would not reflect changes on a dyad level, therefore the effect of dyadic differences may be masked when conducting across-case analysis. Thus, information from each dyad is related to dyad level sales growth within this analysis.

To evaluate dyad performance it is desirable for exporting companies to have a minimum of three years export experience with each importer. Exporters were able to provide sales data at a customer level for twenty-four of the thirty six dyads, the remainder not being older than three years or sales data not being available from their records. In selecting dyad partners exporters were allowed to select less mature relationships to provide insight into the relationship development process.

Yin (1994, pp. 123-4) stresses the need for 'high quality analysis' based on four principles: relying on all the data; including all major rival interpretations; addressing the most significant aspects of the case study; and, using prior expert knowledge in case analysis. He also warns of the need for an analytical strategy to remain focussed. In this regard, this research focussed on the analysis of common understanding within the dyad (importance, satisfaction, relationship strength) as it relates to export performance and other key dyad influences.

The specific quantitative techniques utilised in this analysis are correlation analysis, paired *t*-Test and regression analysis. The 'Pearson correlation coefficient' summarises the strength and direction of association between two variables (Malhotra, 1993, Zikmund, 1994). Although it does not imply causation, it is a powerful measure of the association between variables which can be linked or explained by the qualitative data in the case studies.

The dyadic nature of this research, with two matched perspectives of the same dyad relationship, lends itself to paired *t*-Test analysis. This test provides a measure of the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores of two related samples (Malhotra, 1993). Within this research, the paired *t*-Test was used to highlight differences in exporter and importer survey responses on the perceived importance of supplier selection criteria, perceived satisfaction on those selection criteria, and perceptions of relationship strength.

Regression analysis is applied to survey data for brand importance and satisfaction from the exporters' and importers' perspective, to test five hypotheses related to the role of brands within dyads. The association between relationship strength and the length of

the relationship, dyad sales growth, and satisfaction is tested using multiple regression in Chapter 5.

Within this research the quantitative analysis is an important but supplemental component of the qualitative analysis of the multiple cases. The explanatory role of the research remains the primary focus of the research concept, analysis and results.

Chapter 4: Supplier Search and Selection

Chapter Outline

- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Summary of Relevant Literature**
- 4.3 Selection Criteria**
- 4.4 Search Process**
- 4.5 Dyad Performance**
- 4.6 Conclusions**

Chapter 4: Supplier Search and Selection

“We receive faxes from so many exporters around the world ... add them to a list and throw them away.”
(HC19)

4.1 Introduction:

International exchange is the product of joint decisions made by two or more people based in different countries (Toyne, 1989; Liang and Parkhe, 1997). For most firms this will mean the convergence of the vendor choices of importers with the partner selection of exporters. While for every exporter there must be at least one importer, a review of the published literature reveals that the bulk of research to date has adopted a single perspective, that of the exporter. Very few studies have addressed the formation and performance of the exporter-importer dyad. This is surprising since it is the dyad relationship that forms the medium of international exchange. The main purpose of this component of the study was to advance understanding of how dyads are formed across international boundaries.

4.2 Summary of Relevant Literature:

The dominance of exporter-based research studies in the extant literature has confined the importer to a subordinate and largely passive role in international exchange. However, international competition has forced a reassessment of the traditional exporter-driven selection process and caused some refocussing on strategic partnerships that complement the expertise of the buyer/importer (Spekman 1988; Carter and Narasimhan 1990). A prospective supplier/exporter is supposedly matched against specific attributes to determine if they meet the prerequisite standard and only qualifying suppliers are then assessed further for their potential as dyad partners. However, empirical studies of international buying strategies have now identified a proliferation of sourcing strategies with many international buyers resorting to either a mix of these (Kotabe and Omura, 1989) or to no definable strategy at all (Min and Galle, 1991).

The inconsistent application of defined sourcing strategies lends some credence to the view that the formation of international exchange dyads is idiosyncratic rather than strategic, based on specific supplier attributes that are perceived as relevant by the importer. The research on importer behaviour has tended then to concentrate on the nature and mix of these attributes (see Liang and Parkhe, 1997, p. 514) ranging from corporate-level financial strength (Ellram, 1990; Monczka, Nichols and Callahan, 1992) through to product and delivery-related attributes (Spekman, 1991; Chao, Scheuing, Dubas and Mulalanemi, 1993; Birou and Fawcett, 1993; Smytka and Clemens, 1993; Watts and Hahn, 1993; Wilson, 1994). The paper by Liang and Parkhe (1997) re-asserts a much more active, indeed dominant, role for importers in an interactive global search that culminates in the formation of international dyads. This emphasis on joint search behaviour as the process underlying international exchange is examined in this chapter. Joint search behaviour compels a focus on the dyad as the unit of analysis and exploring the process by which dyads are established rather than behaviour within established dyads. The scope and complexity of the search process means that it is constrained by the bounded rationality of the parties involved and so destined to produce satisficing outcomes. Liang and Parkhe also develop an important research agenda and the objective here is to offer some exploratory findings on three of the issues raised, as follows:

- What are the main criteria used by importers to select foreign suppliers?
- What is the nature of the search process through which exporter-importer dyads are formed?
- What are the salient characteristics of high and low performing exporter-importer dyads?

4.3 Selection Criteria:

It is important to identify what the importer is seeking from an overseas supplier and any marked differences in perceptions and priorities within established exporter-importer dyads. The first approach to this was to ask all dyad members to rate the importance of the attributes which, through a search process, led to the formation of the dyad. A set of 26 attributes was presented (See Appendix 5). In Table 4.1 presents the

data (means and variances) relating to top ten attributes actually employed by the importers in making their foreign supplier choice. The exporters' rating of the importance of these same attributes, to the importer, are also presented and significant differences between the means are discussed.

Table 4.1: Importance of Attributes for Selecting Foreign Suppliers					
Attribute	Mean Response		Variance		t-Test **
	Importer	Exporter	Importer	Exporter	
Product Quality	5.7	5.5	0.35	0.61	-0.66
Mutual Trust & Knowledge	5.7	5.2	0.41	0.69	-2.47 *
Dependable Delivery	5.7	5.4	0.83	0.77	-1.05
Responsiveness to Problems	5.4	5.2	0.98	0.79	-1.07
Style and Appearance of Product	5.4	5.0	1.23	0.76	-2.17 *
Dependable for Long-Term Supply	5.4	4.6	0.9	1.77	-2.93 **
Level of Commitment	5.3	5.1	1.23	0.49	-0.93
Price Competitiveness	5.3	5.2	1.14	0.74	-0.35
Stable Management	5.1	4.4	0.77	1.25	-2.81 **
After Sales Service	5.0	4.5	1.23	1.04	-2.75 **
* and ** indicate difference in mean responses are significant at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$ respectively. Note: The sample in each case is the 36 dyads.					

The attributes are listed in Table 4.1 in descending rank order on the basis of their importance to the importers' search. The correlation coefficient between the full set of importer and exporter rankings of 'importance' is 0.83 (significant at the 1% level), confirming the close similarity in the rankings. The importance of these attributes was confirmed by analysis of respondents' ranking of the 'top 5' selection attributes. 'Price competitiveness' moved into the top 5 for both exporters and importers, replacing 'style and appearance of the product' and exporters also included 'produce to specification'.

To support utilising a triangulation approach, a second confirmation of these attributes was provided by the importers' unprompted responses to the role of country and the process to identify overseas suppliers. The above bid and vendor-related attributes were supplemented by product availability as the major selection criteria. Country is relegated to a secondary screening role, to identify import restrictions, indicating that country-of-origin effects do not influence the decision making process of these importers.

There are five points to note from Table 4.1:

- 1) The high importance attached to so many attributes by the importer confirms other findings and supports Liang and Parkhe's contention that international vendor search will require a satisficing approach.
- 2) There is consensus among exporters and importers on the importance attached to product quality as the key attribute of their international relationship. The top two attributes also have relatively low variances when ranked by importers and exporters, a consistency of view that confirms the importance of these attributes.

Relating first to product quality, a USA apparel importer (AC3) commented as follows:

"I've got to go out and find products from New Zealand that are interesting, unique, price competitive, made by companies that are not afraid to export and have the capability of exporting to the United States. Therefore (we) have a certain quality standard and ability to perform to our market...A bad supplier would be someone who doesn't pick up on the details required – by that I mean sloppy on how the product would be shipped. They don't pay attention to the condition of the product when it arrives here and arrives [sic] in the customer's hands".

From the horticulture sector and the opposite end of the dyad, a New Zealand exporter (H2) saw product quality in a very similar light:

"I think top of the list would be quality. We are expensive, just by the nature of how far we have to go. Our products are not cheap, so they are looking for a high quality product that has got good storage life and shelf life on it. It is not going to give them problems when they sell it to their customers. ...So they have to have faith in us that we are going to send them good fresh product that they are able to sell with confidence to their customers. Again, this is where consistency comes in....So we have to have good quality control and good consistent grading standards so the product is coming in with no problem to them. They do not have to worry too much about it."

The shared meaning attached to mutual trust and knowledge is apparent in the following extracts that again cover the different countries, product type and dyad position. An Australian apparel importer (AC11) put it this way:

“New Zealand and Australia are very similar. We find it a good relationship as we have a very similar way of doing business. ...I think it is mutual trust between you that’s the most important thing that you have to develop a relationship and having each other’s interests at heart. A lot of relationships in business don’t develop because the supplier likes to create a feeling of uneasiness with the agent that ‘you better perform or you’re out on your ear’ sort of thing all the time. I think that’s the most important thing, that you trust each other and you’re doing the right thing by each other.”

For a New Zealand horticulture exporter (H1), mutual trust and knowledge are summed up in this way:

“They are very similar to us in terms of their philosophy on how to make the business work and to grow is to work together for mutual benefit and I think they are looking for somebody who is prepared to work the business in partnership if you like, on a longer term basis, as we are, more so than a lot of people who would tend to buy on a sale by sale basis or look at it on a much shorter term. ...I think probably the single biggest reason that they went with us in the first place was because they actually know the personalities here.”

And finally, from a different cultural base, the words of a Japanese horticultural importer (HC10):

“(We) seek a supplier who is a reliable person. ...Trust is important to conducting business. Must keep your word to each other, this is the first step to trust. Even if there is no personal relationship, this is not critical to the business if there is trust, that is, both parties honour their word and contract.”

- 3) Importers tend, on average, to attach more importance to attributes than do exporters and for five of the ten attributes the actual importance to

the importer is significantly higher than the exporters' assessment of this.

- 4) Both bid-related attributes (e.g., product quality) and vendor-related attributes (e.g., mutual trust and knowledge) are of particular importance to the importer.
- 5) Price competitiveness was not the main attribute in the importers' choice of supplier, a point that is to some lesser extent shared by the exporters.

These findings on the relative importance of product quality and price are consistent with other studies (Liang and Parkhe, 1997, p. 513) but this analysis confirms that this priority is shared across exporter-importer dyads. The three main areas in which vendor search could be made more efficient are those involving the dependability of the exporter as a source of long term supply; stability in the exporter's management team; and after sales service:

"The business is very difficult due to supply variations – some seasons there is a large supply, then the next there is not. This affects prices. (We) would like to minimise risk and stabilise prices by spreading out shipments at a committed price. ...The New Zealand system is not yet organised and stable. They are always trying new ways and changing the method. This is unique for the Japanese who are used to stability. Suppliers in New Zealand have a sense of gambling, therefore always seek more and higher risks rather than stability. US does not use this way of business." (HC22)

"Weaknesses?" "I think delivery times...things have been delivered on time but in the past we have had problems with deliveries. It had difficulties, particularly with repeats...if you want repeats, or do a fill-in on perhaps on a good selling colour or style, that's proved to be some difficulty. The problem is that you think you are going to get it, you tell the customer and that's a downside as far as your business is concerned. It hurts our image with our customers if we say 'Yes it can be done' and then it can't or doesn't happen. To my mind that would be the most difficult part ...they say they will have it within 2 weeks. Well, 4, 5, 6

weeks later we still haven't got it. A bad supplier doesn't deliver on time. The product isn't the same as the sample – I think that is very important. That delivers broken ranges so that over a size range of merchandise, you get two sizes out of five and straight away you have an oddment.” (AC10)

It is on each of these ‘top ten’ areas that the importers attach significantly more importance than do the exporters. Moving beyond this set of ten attributes there are three other areas of lesser importance to the importer where nevertheless the exporters could increase their attractiveness as an international supplier. These areas are: adapting the product to suit local needs; packaging; and advertising/promotion support. Finally there are a number of attributes including ‘speed of delivery’ and ‘speed of quote’ which are considered to be of low importance by exporter and importer. This suggests that reliability issues involving quality and dependability are the more important in the international context.

Table 4.2 combines the data on the importance of the search criteria to the importer with the importers’ level of satisfaction on these criteria. Rather than present all 26 attributes, the data is confined to those attributes which are significantly different (5% level, one tail test) on both importance and satisfaction to the importer. This significance test is the basis for the HIGH/LOW dichotomy employed in the table.

Table 4.2: Importance and Satisfaction in Vendor Choice		
Satisfaction	Importance	
	High	Low
	Product Quality Mutual Trust & Knowledge Dependable for Long-Term Supply	Credit/Payment Terms
Low	Dependable Delivery Price Competitiveness	Advertising/Promotion Speed of Sales Quote Product Range Trade Marks & Brands

By incorporating the importers’ level of satisfaction with the overseas supplier on key attributes, this table also reveals something of the exporters’ performance. The main

areas where exporter performance needs to improve are those in the lower left quadrant. To some extent poor exporter performance in terms of say price and delivery are being compensated by generous credit/payment being extended by the exporter. The relatively small scale of the New Zealand-based suppliers means that neither party to the dyad places too much importance on the marketing mix items located in the lower right-hand quadrant, i.e., advertising support, product range and brands (Lye and Hamilton, 1998).

A correlation of exporter and importer responses, across all embedded survey responses, reveals that importer responses are significantly and positively correlated (35% of correlations) and therefore tend to move in the same direction. Exporter responses are positively correlated to a lesser extent (24% significant). Exporter and importer responses do not appear to be correlated (6%) with 18% negative coefficients, indicating that perceptions are formed relatively autonomously.

The correlations indicate that changes in perceptions of one or more criteria will have a positive influence on other perceptions, implying that a focused strategy to improve importer perceptions on a few important supply attributes will yield multiple benefits.

Exporters believe they offer additional beneficial attributes to potential importers which influence their supplier decision, adding thirty two attributes to the list provided. Importers did not add to the list, effectively negating the exporters perceived unique benefits and sending a strong message regarding basic priorities.

4.4 Search Process:

The search process by which exporter-importer dyads are formed has traditionally been conceived as exporter-driven with the role of the importer often confined to the extent to which they are the source of unsolicited export orders. The extract at the head of the paper indicates that many exporters also engage in unsophisticated searching for international partners. A search process that is both multi-national and multi-attribute will be constrained by the bounded rationality of the searchers. However my findings suggest that the search behaviour which led to these established dyads may not have been the atomistic process envisaged in Liang and Parkhe. Across the four countries and two industries featured in this study, third party referrals were the main route to the

formation of a dyad. Individual importers do not have to locate individual exporters which satisfies. One party needs to find a third party, e.g., another importer, who is able to recommend a reliable exporter. The involvement in the search process of a broker greatly reduces the complexity of the search and raises the prospects of a satisfactory outcome. The study participants were asked how they identified their dyad partner and the following are representative of their replies:

“There are very few markets that I haven’t been to and I have visited customers and spoken to freight forwarders who specialise in supplies. You go to freight forwarders who are handling certain people and you sit down with the manager there and ask, ‘Who pays your bills? Who doesn’t pay your bills?’ You go to trucking companies when you go to a market place and find out who is doing the trucking and who specialises in what we handle. ‘Do you get paid? Don’t you get paid?’ ...you build up a narrow area of who they are doing business with in other countries and what brands they handle. ...There are a number of people who we have met over the years – there is always somebody who knows somebody. They will usually say, ‘Yes, go ahead’ or ‘No, I would not go with this lot.’ You do get a feel for whether they will be a good customer.” (H4)

“For instance in Peru – last year we wanted to get involved in Peru and deal direct. We actually sent people down to Peru to the growing areas and just started asking questions. If you go to the producing areas and go to the packing houses – just walk in and introduce yourself, and you can usually get a starting point and go from there. They recommend this guy or that guy. Why not ask questions, can’t kill you.” (HC1)

“It becomes very much a word of mouth, personal reference type of situation, in that I believe that (1) we go see where we would like to sell the product, and (2) start asking those people who are the best people they deal with, who are the best agents, and then we will go from that angle and then we talk to people we know in the trade and just put it together. Gradually you find that one or two names keep popping up all the time.” (A3)

“More often it’s [exporters] that are referred to me by companies I’m already doing business with. They are probably my primary source of developing new products.”
(AC6)

Thus search behaviour is being conducted to a large extent through an informal brokerage network. This does not mean that the search process avoids bounded rationality but it does mean that importers and exporters can simplify their individual search and rely on the knowledge of their network of brokers. Searching via networks that are informal but informed is clearly important to the creation of effective international dyads. Ineffective searching behaviour would include the practice of sending unsolicited fax messages across the globe but, witness the short extract at the head of this paper, this is what many exporters continue to do.

Once the dyad partner is identified, contracts are the preferred style of formal agreement for apparel importers and exporters, while horticulture exporters prefer ‘gentleperson’s agreements’¹⁰. Australian and US importers prefer gentleperson’s agreements, however all Japanese importers preferred contracts. Although formal company policy may require contracts, daily business practices may differ:

“Senior management requests contracts, but these do not occur in practice.”
(HC23)

“I have been with the company for 25 years and I have never done a contract.”
(HC13)

4.5 Dyad Performance:

This section focuses directly on performance within individual exporter-importer dyads, another area where very little research has been possible. Dyad performance was measured as average annual change in sales to the importer over the three-year period 1992-1995. Data on average sales growth was provided for 25 of the 36 dyads with considerable variation in dyad performance ranging from –36% per year to over 600%

¹⁰ The term “gentlemen’s agreement” was used almost exclusively by respondents. In the spirit of gender neutrality, ‘gentleperson’s agreement’ has been used in this document.

per year. With the dyad as the unit of analysis and working across the cases, performance is associated with age of the dyad and the prominence of vendor-related attributes.

Age effects: A number of dyad partners had clearly recognised the cyclical nature of the dyad relationship and the challenges associated with avoiding decline. The following are extracts from two of the case folders:

"...(the) relationship has definitely entered the mature stage and I am now trying to address how to maintain it in that place and avoid decline". (H1)

"We are on the second cycle...we have been through the cycle and are beginning again...we've all had to make changes ...we've been through the decline...I'd say that there's been a focus to change what we are doing to keep the relationship together (HC5)

"The relationship is in the growing stage, even though it is a new business – two or three year relationship. Have visited New Zealand and (exporter). We wanted to check the performance of the factory – we were very happy to see the results." (AC7)

To illustrate the cycle effect within dyads the 25 dyads were grouped into four categories based on their rate of sales growth. The dyads were grouped into the four broad performance categories in the following sequence: 'new/emerging' group of dyads each had average sales growth in excess of 100%; 'decline' dyads each had negative average sales growth; 'mature' each had positive sales growth of under 10%; and the 'growth' category was the residual containing dyads with average sales growth rates ranging from 33% to 92%. Clearly these groupings, presented in Table 4.3, are arbitrary but they are sufficient to demonstrate the cyclical effect alluded to in the interviews.

The dyad group characteristics reveal a new entrant period of very high growth as sales increase from a small initial base. This leads into a phase of sustained growth as the volume of trade steadily increases. The maturity level of sales for these dyads was reached after an average of nine years after which the sales level begins to decline quite rapidly.

Table 4.3: Dyad Performance Cycle				
Dyad Grouping (number of dyads)		Customer Sales Growth (% pa)	Relationship Length (years)	Average Sales (\$m pa)
Entrant	(4)	332	4.8	0.5
Growth	(7)	55	8.3	1.4
Maturity	(4)	4	9.0	3.3
Decline	(10)	-23	12.2	2.5

If both partners are benefiting from the trade relationship and seek to continue to work together, the original business approach developed earlier in the relationship must evolve to meet the current business environment and market requirements. This will lead to a new approach emerging with a revitalised sales cycle and growth phase. The challenge for both exporter and importer is for them each to recognise this cyclical effect and proactively manage their relationship through the transition process. Exporter flexibility, open communication and mutual respect will assist in this process. However, some dyads will always feature at the extremes of the range of performance and the distinctive characteristics of these dyads are the focus of the next section.

Low and High performers: The lowest performing dyads were between 8 and 20 years old and average annual sales had fallen to around \$0.5 million per year from a peak of some \$1.6 million. Content analysis of the lowest performing dyads reveals what I would describe as a lack of ‘closeness’ in the dyad with some tendency for the exporter to act opportunistically in pursuit of additional sales. This lack of closeness, described by one as *“a little bit of distance”* is compounded by communications difficulties which another described as *“communication level ..is null and void as far as I am concerned”*.

A mere change of employee can also have a dramatic effect of the sales volume in the dyad. One importer refused to purchase from two newer exporter employees but has not made this known the exporter. The basis for this was a perceived fall in the mutual trust and honesty across the dyad. Another importer lamented the *“faceless people”* who make up the exporter’s staff. These problems are clearly vendor-related and quite distinct from the bid-related attributes that are normally focused on in international marketing. However, remaining with the lowest performing dyad, the falling rapport

was also compounded by dissatisfaction on marketing aspects particularly those involving delivery times and price competitiveness.

The highest performing dyads were younger, between 4 and 10 years old, and larger with average sales of \$1.4 million and continuing to grow. In contrast with the low performers, these dyads were founded on a high level of personal familiarity, with a number of references being made to 'integrity' and 'mutual respect'. These dyads exemplified an openness of communication and complementarity of focus:

"When contacted the [exporter] responded with an immediate phone call. When [importer] requires data, [exporter] responds clearly. The relationship is independent of product volume. We can declare our ideas to them and they understand." (HC23)

"I was intrigued by the New Zealanders I met, I like them. I met people in Chicago at the National Sporting Goods Show, then attended the Export Trade Fair in Auckland in 1982/83. I took a gamble and bought a ticket to Auckland and it went from there. ...Visits are a necessity, at least once a year, if not twice. And I also encourage the companies that I'm involved in to make the trip and come up here, either to attend one of the trade shows that I exhibit in or to travel the circuit and call on accounts." (AC13)

"I think that the New Zealand manufacturers seem to have a good feel for this type of product. ...I think that there is a lot of work done by New Zealand companies that is more suited to our ranges than what I can buy in Australia. That is quite interesting really. Communication is very open. ...We place orders well in advance to give them time". (AC10)

The sense coming from the content of the high performing cases is that vendor-related attributes are predominant in the relationship and are sufficiently strong to overcome any bid-related problem. While I agree with Liang and Parkhe (1997, p. 515) that such vendor-related variables are more difficult to control than bid-related aspects, their importance to the success of the dyad means that they must be carefully managed. Such attributes are sensitive and, as noted above, they can be seriously damaged by a mere change of personnel. Hence the need to preserve a closeness to the partner and so avoid major damage to the relationship.

4.6 Conclusions:

This chapter reports on a number of the important issues raised recently by Liang and Parkhe (1997). First it cast light on the search process involved in dyad creation. Access to and use of informed networks emerged as critical to effective search. However this method of searching involves a high cost in terms of managers' time and effort. The research also uncovered evidence suggesting the continued high use of low cost searching (the unsolicited fax message) which is likely to be ineffective. Second I have identified the main vendor search criteria employed by importers and pointed to the areas where the perceptions and performance of suppliers were most at variance with those of the importers. This knowledge should be of value to exporters as they engage in the bilateral search for trading partners. The main lessons to take from this phase of the study are the importance of quality over price; the priority attached to operating on trust rather than power; and the desire to form long-term relationships rather than one-off deals. Third this research investigated dyad performance and identified a cyclical effect on dyad performance, one that should be taken into account in any future research on exporter-importer performance. In addition to age, the best performing dyads are those able to maintain close relationships among the people on either side of the dyad. The nature of these relationships are vendor-related rather than bid-related. Nevertheless they require careful management by the exporter. Fundamentally, more successful dyads are founded on successful relationships between individuals. Sound personal relationships will carry dyads through periods of faltering quality or erratic delivery, levels of performance that would be likely to undermine weaker relationships.

Although international exchange operates through dyads, very few studies have adopted this as their unit of study. There have been no large sample multi-variable studies of dyad formation or performance and future research should rectify this. It would be useful to investigate more extensively the extent to which individual relationships determine dyad success and to what extent this relationship is mediated by partner size asymmetries and by age of dyad.

Chapter 5: Relationship Development

Chapter Outline

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Summary of Relevant Literature

5.3 Relationship Stages

5.4 Factors Influencing Relationship Development

5.5 The Relationship Development Process

5.6 The Role of Trust in Relationship Development

5.7 Summary

Chapter 5: Relationship Development

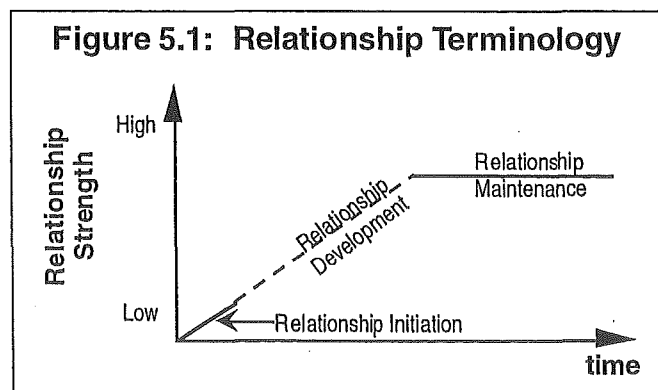
“Overall we strive for long-term relationships that are developed through high standards and principles” (Outdoor Apparel Exporter)

5.1 Introduction:

The nature of the exporter-importer relationship is an important dimension of exporting research which has received scant attention. Export theory and government assistance programs built on the exporters' inaccurate perceptions of the importer and relationship dynamics may be focusing exporters on inappropriate activities which fail to develop the dyad's potential. Therefore, relationships are a priority research area to broaden our export knowledge.

Chapter 5 and 6 of this study are predicated on the concept that relationship dynamics vary between relationship development and relationship maintenance. The purpose of this chapter is to explore different aspects of relationship development within the exporter-importer dyad.

A relationship is defined as a “state of being connected or related ... mutual dealings, connections or feelings that exist between two parties” (Collins English Dictionary, p. 1308). The terms relationship initiation, relationship development and relationship maintenance, as used in this study, are shown in Figure 5.1.



Thus, the chapter focuses on the “development of mutual dealings or connections between exporters and importers”.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the relationship marketing and the relationship development literature, as the context for the relationship aspects of this research (Section 5.2). The extant literature includes two perspectives of relationship development: the stages of relationship development; and, factors contributing to or necessary for a relationship to develop. The existing relationship stages literature is reviewed as a precursor to proposing the simplified relationship stages model used in the case study research (Section 5.3). The factors reported to influence relationship development are then analysed to build an alternate relationship development model (Section 5.4). The importer's perspective of the sequence of an organisational relationship, a personal relationship and a product relationship are reviewed to highlight the importance of understanding an importer's relationship expectations when developing dyadic relationships (Section 5.5). Finally, the role of trust during relationship development is explored using responses to open-ended questions (Section 5.6).

5.2 Summary of Relevant Literature:

The nature of relationships between business entities has become a focus of research with the recent increased emphasis on relationship marketing. Relationship marketing is a very broad concept, encompassing database marketing (Blattberg & Deighton, 1991; Shani, & Chalasoni, 1993; Palmer, 1995; Davis, 1997), telemarketing (Brown & Bruker, 1987; Seitz, 1991; Predmore & Bonnice, 1996), buyer-seller relationships (Sheth, 1983; Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987; Noordewier, John & Nevin, 1990; Ganesan, 1994; Joshi & Arnold, 1998) and business-to-business marketing (Anderson & Narus, 1984, 1990; Frazier, Spekman & O'Neal, 1988; Johnson, Sakano, Cote & Onzo, 1993; Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson, 1994; Leuthesser & Kohli, 1995; Mohn, Fisher & Nevin, 1996). The roots of relationship marketing are as old as the local store owner knowing each customer personally and tailoring service for individual needs. As early as 1963 research articles focused on dyadic relationships (Evans, 1963), with the initial focus on buyer-seller relationships and later evolving into the wider discipline of relationship marketing in the late 1980's and early 1990's (Berry, 1983, 1995; Gummerson, 1987, 1994; Grönroos, 1990, 1994, 1995; Heide & John, 1992; Grundlach & Murphy, 1993; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyer, 1995; Lusch & Brown, 1996).

The lack of an empirical base for understanding the initiation and development of business relationships has been noted by many authors (Ford, 1981; Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987; Heide, 1994; Jackson, 1994; Palmer & Bejou, 1994; Bitner, 1995; Frazier & Anita, 1995; Nevin, 1995; Weitz & Jap, 1995; Wilson, 1995; Sheaves & Barnes, 1996). A number of authors have proposed theoretical models of relationship development, however published empirical support is limited.

5.3 Relationship Stages:

There appears to be little consensus on the stages of the relationship life cycle either within theoretical papers or from supporting empirical research (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Relationship Stages Models								
Ford (1981)	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987)	Cunningham & Homse (1988)	Knox & White (1991)	Moore (1991)	Jackson (1994)	Palmer & Bejou (1994)	Heide (1994)	Wilson (1995)
Theoretical	Theoretical	Empirical	Empirical	Empirical	Theoretical	Empirical	Empirical	Theoretical
Pre-relationship	Awareness	Introductory stage	Uncommitted	New	Non-existent relationship	Stage 1	Relationship Initiation	Partner Search & Selection
Early stage	Exploration	Developing stage	Developing	Growing	Reactive relationship	Stage 2	Relationship Maintenance	Defining Purpose
Development stage	Expansion		Mature	Troubled		Stage 3		
Long-term stage	Commitment	Long-term stage	Decline	Static	Accountability relationship	Stage 4	Relationship Termination	Setting Relationship Boundaries
Final stage	Dissolution			Declining	Showing-Continued-Interest relationship			Creating Relationship Value
					Real-Partner relationship			Relationship Maintenance

Ford (1981) initially proposed a five-stage relationship model, while recommending a ‘relationship manager’ (p. 351) and the strategic management of a portfolio of industrial relationships. Ford’s theoretical paper includes some of the concepts and terminology later applied to relationship marketing. Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987), favoured a five-stage process model and the concept of “bilateral relationship maintenance” (p. 15).

Later theoretical papers (Jackson, 1994; Wilson, 1995) have expanded on either Ford’s or Dwyer et al’s basic models. Anderson (1995), in a comment on Wilson’s article, questioned the linear, structured approach to relationship development and introduced

the concept of “business strands” of “exchange episodes” which “become interwoven through conscious coordination by the partner firms” (p. 347). Bitner (1995) introduced the concept that “relationships are built and promises are kept one encounter at a time” (p. 246). These articles are conceptual, usually drawing on non-marketing literature to develop and propose a relationship life cycle process.

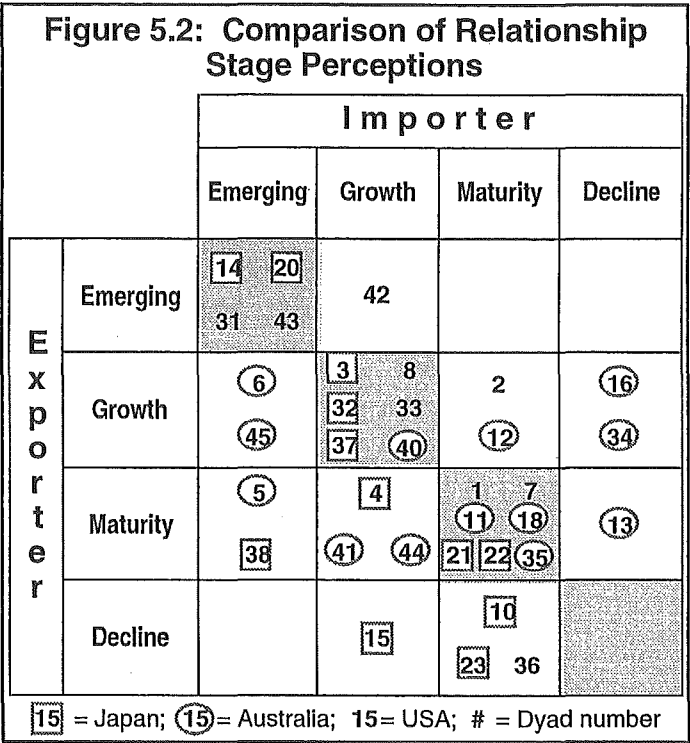
There has been limited empirical work on relationship stages. Ford & Rosson (1982) used a five ‘state’ model (new, growing, troubled, static, inert), finding that “the relationship development process is not necessarily orderly or progressively over time” (p. 270). Rosson (1987) in a follow-up study found that most of the original relationships had become static or were terminated. Cunningham and Homse (1988) used a three-stage model in their research, but did not empirically test the relationship stages model. Knox & White (1991) categorised buyers’ and sellers’ perspectives of the relationship status using terminology derived during data collection, after “both sets of respondents identified four types of relationships” (p. 44). Moore (1991), using Ford & Rosson’s terminology, provided descriptive support for the states. Palmer and Bejou (1994) substituted time (<1 year; 1~2 years; 2~3 years; and, >3 years) for relationship stages, providing limited support for their conclusion “that buyer-seller relationships go through some form of life cycle in terms of components that hold relationships together.” (p. 505). Heide’s (1994) empirical research focused on interfirm governance structures rather than the life cycle concept. Thus, although the concept of relationship stages is developing and stages models have been utilised to explore relationship concepts, the relationship stages model itself has not been empirically tested.

Case Study Results:

The concept of relationship stages was examined using case study responses to a simplified four-stage model, based on the Moore’s (1991) empirically-derived stages. This simplified model was adopted after initial interviews to test the structured interview process revealed that respondents were either confused by, or wanted to argue with, alternate relationship stage terminology rather than respond by assessing the dyad relationship position within the model. The terminology used for the model in this study was slightly modified to reflect current usage by initial respondent. The final model (emerging, growth, maturity, decline) was easily understood by all case study respondents and they were able to classify their dyad positions without further prompting.

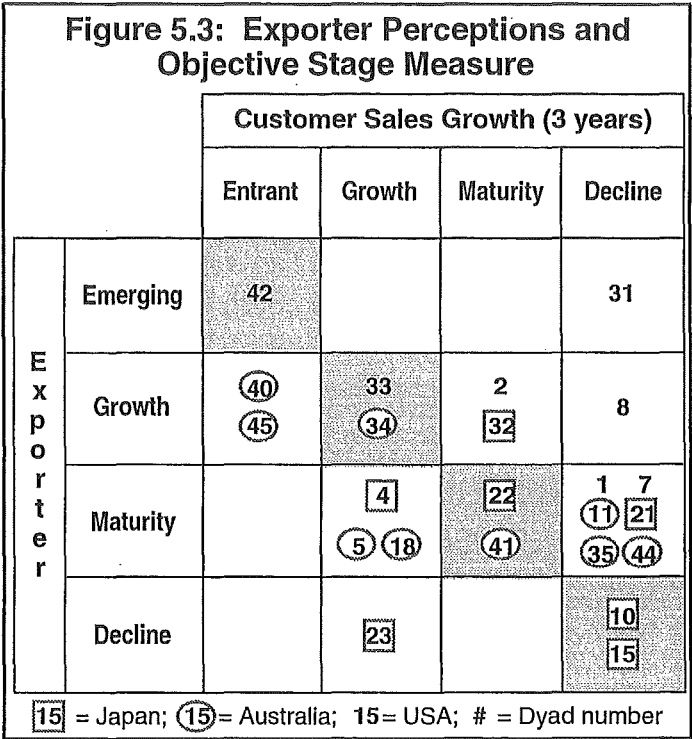
To test the relationship stages concept various analysis approaches were applied to the relationship stages data from the cases, as follows:

- A comparison of perceptions of relationship stages (Figure 5.2) revealed only 50% (17 of the 34) of dyad partners concur. Dyads near stage transition points may yield differences, however the low incidence of agreements indicates model fit difficulties.



- Five (15%) of the dyads (5, 15, 16, 34, 38) revealed a two-stage difference in responses, with neither exporter nor importer taking a consistently more pessimistic view of the relationship. The characteristics of these five dyads were analysed further to identify patterns, including: the length of the relationship; the perceived stages; the importer's country; the relationship strength assessment from the exporter's and importer's perspective; and, the customer sales growth and growth stage. No pattern emerged from the data.
- Figure 5.2 provides a comparison of subjective perceptions of relationship stages by exporter and importer. An objective measure of relationship stage was calculated for the 25 dyads providing customer sales growth data (see

Table 4.3) and compared with exporter (Figure 5.3) and importer (Figure 5.4) perceptions of the dyad relationship stage¹¹.



- Only seven (30%) of exporters’ stage perceptions match the objective measure. Ten (44%) of responses indicate that the objective stage has progressed further than the exporter perceives, with six (26%) less than the exporter perceives.

¹¹ Only 23 dyads provided all three data items.

Figure 5.4: Importer Perceptions and Objective Stage Measure					
		Customer Sales Growth (3 years)			
		Entrant	Growth	Maturity	Decline
I m p o r t e r	Emerging	(45)	(5)		31
	Growth	(40) 42	(4) 33	(32) (41)	8 (15) (44)
	Maturity		(18) (23)	2 (22)	1 7 (10) (11) (21) (35)
	Decline		(34)		
[15] = Japan; (15) = Australia; 15 = USA; # = Dyad number					

- Only five (22%) of the importers' stage perceptions match the objective measure. Thirteen (56%) of the responses indicate that the objective stage has progressed further than the exporter perceives, with five (22%) less than the importer perceives.
- A three-way match (exporter-importer-objective measure) occurs for only two (9%) of the dyads.
- Decline is the most populous objective stage (40%), however there are no dyads where the partners agree they are in decline. One dyad partner indicates a decline in seven (21%) of the dyads (Figure 5.2). Only two of the exporters' responses (but no importers' response) match the objective measure of decline. Dwyer et al's (1987) theoretical article suggested an "interactive nature of relationship dissolution" implying a managed decline process. These data do not support this concept.
- Correlation analysis revealed no significant association between relationship stage and customer sales growth, customer sales growth stage (chapter 4), or the importer's or exporter's relationship strength perception (Table 5.2). The objective measure of the relationship stage is significantly related to the

customer sales growth, providing confirmation of the validity of the stage allocation (Table 4.3).

Table 5.2: Correlation Matrix – Relationship Stage						
	Perceived Stage		Customer Sales Growth	Objective Stage Measure	Relationship Strength	
	Exporter	Importer			Exporter	Importer
Perceived Stage - Exporter	1.00					
Perceived Stage - Importer	0.47**	1.00				
Customer Sales Growth (3 years)	-0.12	-0.35	1.00			
Objective Stage Measure	0.31	0.23	-0.63**	1.00		
Exporter's Relationship Strength Rating	-0.14	-0.06	0.13	-0.20	1.00	
Importer's Relationship Strength Rating	0.19	-0.10	0.20	-0.27	0.16	1.00
** = p < 0.01; * = p < 0.05						

The consistent indication of a mismatch between the perceptual and objective case study data, and a theoretical stages model raises questions regarding the validity of this model. The results support Anderson's (1995) concern regarding the 'linear, structured approach' of the stages models. However, as there are no published articles empirically testing relationship stages models it would be erroneous to conclude the stages models are invalid.

It is important to recognise that respondents could easily categorise their dyad relationship within the stages model provided, even though it has no significant correlation to the objective measure. This raises concern for respondent categorisation to predetermined models which may not have been derived from empirical research or may be based on a non-representative sample.

The failure of these findings to support the stages model leads here to the proposing of an alternate approach to dyad relationships, one based on the dyad responses.

5.4 Factors Influencing Relationship Development:

Each relationship stages model includes factors influencing relationship development as part of the explanation of the relationship life cycle. When combined with other theoretical and empirical research the list of relationship development variables becomes quite comprehensive, however, within the context of relationship development the number of empirical articles remains small and almost half of the theoretical variables have not been empirically tested (see Appendix 7).

To understand the development of relationships both exporters and importers were asked, "How do you develop and build relationships with your international customers/suppliers?" A summary of the most frequently mentioned relationship development factors is presented in Table 5.3. Two aspects are apparent from a comparison of Appendix 7 and Table 5.3: first, many of the conceptual relationship variables were not mentioned by the respondents, indicating that they are not relevant to the relationship development process in these cases; and second, there is a closer link between the supplier selection criteria, product-related variables and relationship development than is currently conceptualised in the models.

Importer performance factors were not prominent in the responses. The importers' performance as a factor influencing relationship development received only 3% of importer mentions, and was not mentioned by exporters. This is surprising given the exporters desire to open new markets and develop overseas market opportunities and their reliance on the importer to achieve these goals. Conceptually, the performance of the product in the market and the importers' role in this performance should be a major influence on continuing export channel relationships. The importance placed on product-related factors, including 'marketable product', by the importer is in contrast to the lack of accountability for the importer to perform in the market, to developing the relationship. This implies the importer has more influence than the exporter in the export relationship (Leonidou, 1989a, 1989b; Katsikeas & Piercy, 1991) and that the focus is primarily on the factors influencing how the companies work together and/or deliver the product to the importer. The very low frequency of mention of the importers' performance within these cases, by both sides of the dyad, requires further research.

A review of responses reveals that there are both dyad and country variations in relationship development factor responses. Exporters rely to a greater extent on

intercompany interaction than importers (36% versus 24%), whereas importers place more importance on product and exporter performance. Exporters mentioned twice as many factors as the importers.

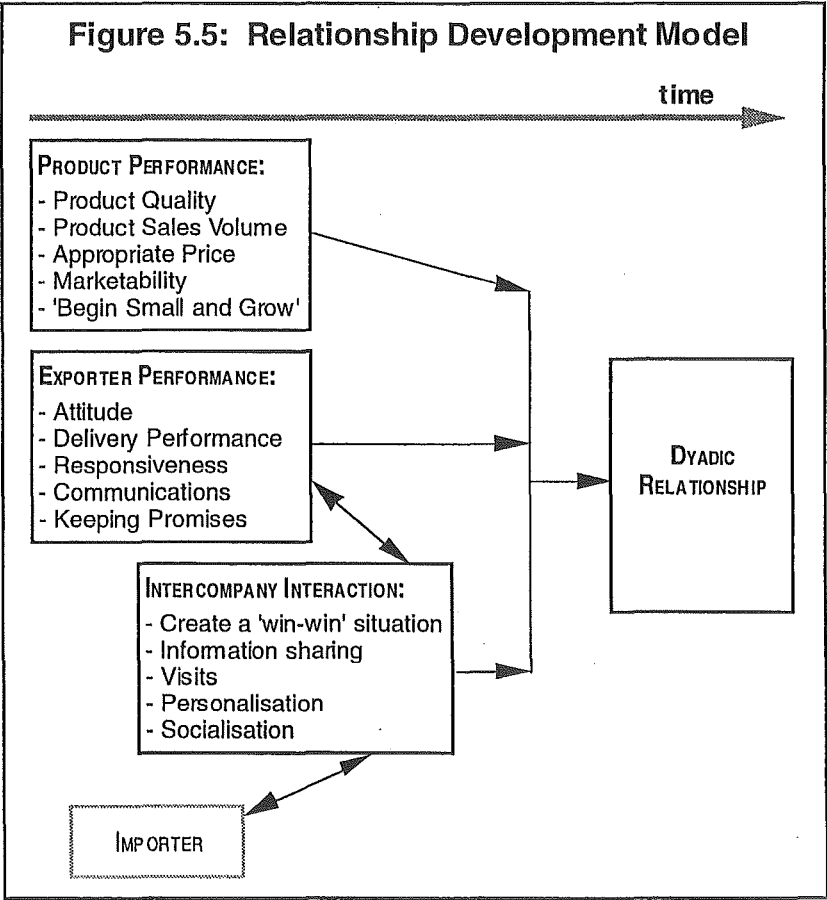
Table 5.3: Relationship Development Factor Responses					
Relationship Development Factors	Exporter Responses (n = 9)	Importer Responses			
		Total (n = 36)	Australia (n = 14)	USA (n = 9)	Japan (n = 13)
PRODUCT PERFORMANCE:	(23%)	(29%)	(36%)	(24%)	(26%)
Product Quality	4	7	3	1	3
Product Sales Volume	1	7	3	1	3
Appropriate Price	2	6	2	1	3
Marketable Product	3	4	2	1	1
Begin Small and Grow	2	4	2	0	2
EXPORTER PERFORMANCE:	(36%)	(39%)	(33%)	(47%)	(39%)
Attitude (effort, understanding)	1	12	4	0	8
Delivery Performance	5	9	3	2	4
Responsiveness	5	6	2	1	3
Communications	5	5	2	3	0
Keeping Promises	3	5	0	2	3
IMPORTER PERFORMANCE:	(0%)	(3%)	(0%)	(12%)	(2%)
Performance in the Market	0	2	0	1	1
Prompt Payment	0	1	0	1	0
INTERCOMPANY INTERACTION:	(36%)	(24%)	(27%)	(18%)	(24%)
Create a Win-Win Situation	1	9	3	3	3
Information Sharing	5	4	1	0	3
Visits	3	4	1	0	3
Personalisation	6	3	2	0	1
Socialisation	4	3	2	0	1
TIME:	(5%)	(5%)	(3%)	(0%)	(9%)
	3	5	1	0	4
Factors mentioned per respondent	5.7	2.7	2.4	1.7	3.4
Note: Percentages (5%) refer to the percentage of total responses in the table					

Country variations are apparent between the US and Australia, and to a lesser extent, Japan. In essence, the US importers place a higher reliance than Australia or Japan on exporter and importer performance to build relationships, and a lower reliance on product performance and intercompany interaction. Australian importers place the highest emphasis on product performance.

Within each of these relationship development components, there are also different response level for each development factor. Only one factor ('attitude', Japan, 62%) received more than one-third of the potential importer support. The low level of

consensus on specific factors is indicative of unstructured responses to the open-ended question approach used in these case studies.

Although there are response variations, the unprompted mentions of the majority of these relationship development components lends itself to a generalised relationship development model. Interview transcript analysis revealed a pattern of responses. After analysing the responses, these groups have been labelled: product performance; exporter performance; and, intercompany interaction. Schematically they are represented in Figure 5.5.



This conceptual model is a composite of the various dyad responses to questions on developing and building international relationships. No individual respondent included all components, however many aspects are implicit in specific dyad responses.

A New Zealand (NZ) apparel exporter (A2) exporting to Australia, the US and Japan. The exporter supported the US importer when he purchased the importing company and arranged to bring the importer and five customers to NZ to meet exporters of complementary products. The visit included product

demonstrations and socialisation (boating, fishing and hospitality) to build relationships. The focus was on mutual profit.

Although the exporter's attitude and intercompany interaction are implicit in this summary, the role of the product and exporter performance are emphasised in the exporter's response to the relationship development question:

"Like any relationship you have got to have the product to offer them. Offering them product under their terms ... in other words, if they want to trial a product we will sell them one (item). So we start under their terms ... That does not mean we sacrifice ourselves to get in there, but at the same time we work with them as much as possible to prove to them that our product will sell to them. If they do select the product and if they do run with it, then we go across there ... We follow up in-season, ... after sales service and prompt replies ... Obviously quality product is very, very important, and timely deliveries. All the general items."

One NZ horticulture exporter was quite humble about their efforts, but displayed many of the model components in his responses. His relationships were long-term and sound.

"I'm not sure we have the blueprint for this. I think it happens over time through our performance, sending the right product, at the right time, at the right quality, when you say you can do it. ... It happens over time, through performance. Then it would be strengthened by getting along with the person in a social sense ... It is a very personal and human business. Sometimes it carries on without a personal relationship, but actually not very often, I think."

A corresponding importer (HC1) echoed the exporters sentiments, emphasising the product combined with performance on both sides, plus quality, volume and price, as necessary to build a relationship.

A second importer (HC2) from the same exporter responded:

"It is a self-fulfilling prophecy, we hope, by working closely with the supplier. Once we've made the deal then the 'balls in our court' and we take the

commodity and run with it; do the development work; and then we will work with the supplier to try to put together whatever trade promotions, trade advertising, whatever it is that we together think is needed to develop the introduction of the product."

One Japanese importer (HC23) was very careful about answering this question and considered his response before answering:

"A difficult question. The product comes first, at a reasonable price. Both parties must be able to work together, to meet the objectives. (Importer) likes to build a relationship where they can put forward ideas about the market and discuss it with the producers in an open way to generate ideas about how to make it happen. Through this idea exchange process (we) can recognise if we have the right partner -- if the 'ball is caught'.

It is interpersonal in a sense, person-to-person, give and take ...

It is an accumulation of small successes which help to build a relationship. Many small successes (and) a relationship builds sooner. The economic viability is important ...

... language skills and understanding of local business will help, but can be substituted by other alternatives. ... understand(ing) customer needs, identifying needs, that is the key."

The role of each model component as it relates to the relationship development process outlined in the model can be summarised as follows:

Time:

Time is insufficient on its own to develop a relationship, but its passing is required for a relationship to develop. The longer-term nature of relationships and the often heard marriage analogy was reflected upon by one importer (HC14):

"We do not have a 'passing affair' with suppliers. We need a long-term relationship with a few suppliers. It is like a courtship and love, not an affair."

This perspective of time is consistent with Leuthesser and Kohli's (1995) finding that, "Age appears to moderate the influence of interaction frequency and initiating behaviour on buyer satisfaction." (p. 227).

Product Performance:

The role of the product in the relationship development process is not recognised in current relationship models. The importance of the product is reflected in the following importer comment (HC14):

"... if not a good product, 'Nice to see you -- bye'"

The implications of this are well understood by the export partner to this dyad (H3):

"You try to get some 'runs on the board' with one product, and it builds from there."

A marketable product of acceptable quality is a prerequisite for initiating relationships with many importers. Once the product creates an opportunity there is a trade-off between a desire to increase sales volume and manage the risk associated with new dyad partners (H5):

"Start to become big with people you don't know can always become detrimental. It's better to build a business -- it lasts longer."

The concept of a minimum threshold of effort prior to a relationship and the role of the product in this minimum threshold, was commented upon by an importer (HC8):

"To have a relationship required two factors:

- 1) Manufacturer must want a partner who will establish an appropriate channel to develop sales*
- 2) Wholesaler will require the manufacturer to respond to market requests for appropriate products for the market.*

When these factors are met, it is possible to establish a relationship."

Exporter Performance:

Building a relationship, from the importers perspective, is very dependent on the attitude of the exporter, that is, their efforts towards the importer and their willingness to understand the importer's market requirements. The exporter's attitude was the most frequently cited relationship development factor influencing the importer, and was particularly prominent in the Japanese responses.

The delivery performance of the exporter links back to its prominence as a supplier selection criteria. The high rating of this item (second equal most important overall) highlights the need to attend to this aspect of export marketing.

An appropriate price influences the importer's willingness to work with the exporter. Importers do not seek the cheapest product, rather they seek a combination of quality and price which is appropriate for the market.

Communication, responsiveness and keeping promises are related to respecting the importer and endeavouring to treat them as a valued business partner. Promise keeping links back to Bitner's (1995) article and reflects her services marketing links. The respondents in this sample also seek this service factor. Responsiveness also requires attention (HC1):

"If there is a problem or failure and the (exporter) is not responsive, we do not deal with them"

Intercompany Interactions:

Intercompany interactions are the focal point of most theoretical relationship development models. The importers clearly ranked 'creating a win-win situation' as the most important intercompany factor influencing relationship development (also second equal overall), however only one exporter recognised this need.

The value of information sharing and visits were recognised by both parties, particularly during relationship development. The exporter tries to personalise the relationship and uses socialisation as the approach for creating that personal bond. Some importers require socialising and for them this aspect of intercompany interaction is important to developing the relationship (HC14):

“Socialising is the real time to get to know each other.”

The Relationship Development Model:

In a study of factors influencing successful export practices Styles and Ambler (1994) recognised that in addition to marketing factors, relational factors influence the success of the exporter. Although they were focussed on the influence of marketing factors on success, they suggested “that the RP (relationship paradigm) factors are dominant in explaining the success of the sampled firms ...” (p. 33). Thus Styles & Ambler argue for including relationship marketing factors in export marketing research.

In contrast, this research has highlighted the importance of marketing mix factors (product quality, appropriate price, marketable product) to relationship development and thus the relationship marketing paradigm. The inclusion of product-related factors in the relationship development process is a departure from the existing conceptual models. Wilson’s (1995) proposed model excluded the product, however he recognised the product had a support role, “These relationships developed in a natural way over time as the buyers and sellers developed trust and friendships supported by quality products and services.” (p. 335). My analysis of factors influencing relationship development indicates a more central and leading role for the product.

Relationship development is difficult for companies and three of the importers specifically commented that this was a difficult question to answer. As one importer noted:

“If business is good, it is easy to develop a relationship. When there are problems and issues, when the relationship is tested, it is built or broken.”

Meanwhile, for the exporter, the struggle is converting “*relationships into dollars, which is also quite challenging.*”

Throughout the responses to the question on relationship development, the underlying theme was “*Performance comes before the relationship.*”

5.5 The Relationship Development Process:

The role of the organisation and the individual in relationship development has created considerable debate. Sheaves & Barnes (1996), drawing on the social psychology literature pertaining to the establishment and maintenance of relationships between individuals conclude, "All of the literature examined for the purposes of this review indicates that relationships exist between individuals, not organisations" (p. 239). They also indicate that, "Companies must take different approaches to the establishment of relationships with different segments of customers." (p. 241). Young & Wilkinson (1989) and Barksdale, Johnson & Suh (1997) found both interpersonal and interfirm dimensions present in marketing channels.

To provide an initial validation of the role of product in building the relationship and to investigate the role of personal and corporate relationships, the importers were asked to respond on "The importance and sequence of product, organisational and personal relationships".

Implicit in this question were three relational dimensions:

- A **product relationship** based on an exporter providing a product which is suitable for the destination market, or can be adapted to make it suitable.
- An **organisational relationship** based on the reputation and financial status of the two organisations. Most importers will not enter a supply relationship unless they are comfortable that the exporter has the productive capacity, raw materials supply, financial strength, and a reputation for performance in meeting contractual obligations.
- A **personal relationship** built on the bond between the individuals in the exporting and importing companies which is based on a mutual trust that transcends formal business structures.

The relationship expectations of the importer determines whether a product, personal or organisational relationship model is appropriate for the development of the business relationship. These three dimensions yield six potential relationship development

sequences¹², with a random pattern suggesting an equal distribution of responses favouring each approach. The importers’ response to the relationship question is provided in Tables 5.4 and 5.5.

Table 5.4: Developing Exporter-Importer Relationships				Table 5.5: Second Stage Relationship Development			
	Primary Relationship Requirement				Subsequent Relationship Sequence		
	Product Relationship	Organisational Relationship	Personal Relationship		Personal → Organisational	Organisational → Personal	
Japan	11	-	1	Japan	4	7	
U.S.A.	5	-	1	U.S.A.	2	3	
Australia	13	-	-	Australia	4	9	

Twenty-nine of the thirty-one importers require the exporter to have a potentially marketable product as the first step in the development of the relationship, providing strong support for the inclusion of product in the relationship development model.

“Product first and way ahead.”

“The product is first 99% of the time.”

The primacy of the product in the relationship development process is based on the importers’ trade-off between the desire to introduce new or improved products to the market, time pressures and their high workload caused by corporate restructuring. Thus, importers are very selective in creating new supplier relationships and this has tempered their receptiveness to approaches from new exporting firms. The primacy of the product is supported by the relationship development and relationship quality responses from importers (see next chapter).

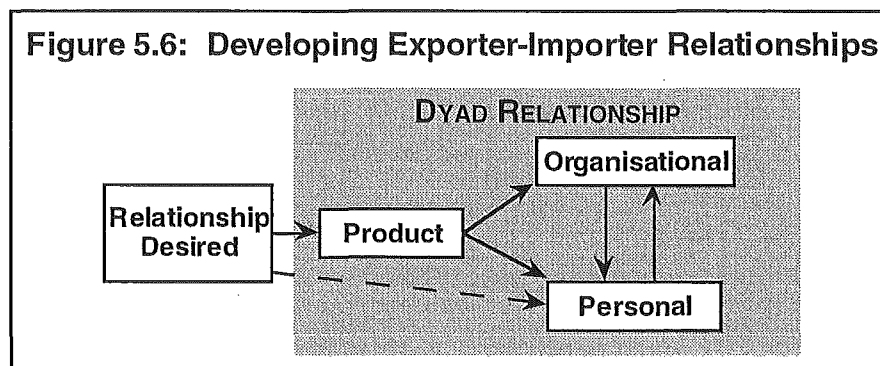
The two exceptions to the ‘product first’ approach both favoured a personal relationship as the initial stage of relationship development. Of the twenty-nine ‘product first’ importers, a second phase of an organisational relationship is preferred (2:1) over a personal relationship.

Most popular literature (Huddleston, 1990; Morris, 1987; Simons, 1993) and academic articles (Hundlebury, 1984; Johnson, Sakano & Oh, 1990; Dace, 1990) identify

¹² (Pr)oduct-(O)rganisational-(Pe)rsonal; Pr-Pe-O; O-Pr-Pe; O-Pe-Pr; Pe-O-Pr; Pe-Pr-O.

substantial differences between Western and Eastern cultures, in establishing relationships. This view is not supported, in terms of relationship sequence preferences, by the results of this sample -- there is no apparent country differences among Japan, the USA and Australia.

The importers in this sample prefer a product-based initial relationship followed by an organisational or personal relationship, depending on the relationship expectations of the importer (Figure 5.6). Therefore, exporters must understand the importer's relationship expectations to successfully initiate and develop an export relationship.



The responses of the importers indicate that there are multiple paths to create relationships. The two importers choosing personal relationships (dashed arrow above) as the first step commented:

"To me it is personal." (US)

"Small company strength is person-to-person ... the basis is interpersonal relationship -- we start and end the business with the people. This is the basis of success" (Japan)

For those importers preferring an initial product-based relationship the role and timing of the personal relationship development varied:

"I discount personal relationships." (US)

"I don't see the personal relationship ... as of much importance at all." (Australia)

“When you reach a certain stage the relationship is interpersonal.”

(Japan)

“The relationship is based on organisation ... but soon the personal must become more important ... interpersonal is much more important.”

(Japan)

Finally, some importers avoid personal relationships in business:

“My job is not to enjoy personal relationships with other people, it is to create an environment of productivity and profit for the company.”

(AC 5)

This research, like the majority of relationship marketing research, focuses on positive aspects of relationships. However, there are ongoing negative relationships which are based on the quality of the product and the ability to profitably handle those products.

“(Supplier) is bad business, but doing business with him as he always supplies the best quality product, without question.”

(HC4)

“... you stay with them because you make a lot of money out of the deal ... has a nightmare of a relationship with those people, but he doesn’t tell them to ‘get nicked’ because he can make a lot of money along the way. But every day he curses and swears about them, and that is an unhappy way to do business. But, as I said, the dollar has to come first.”

(AC15)

These two dyads represent longer-term product relationships which have little possibility of progressing to closer, cooperative relationships in the future.

In summary, the results of this analysis provide strong support for the primacy of the product in the relationship development process and the need for information sharing and creating a mutually beneficial (win-win) situation based on each importer’s specific needs. The significant role of the product in both relationship development (Figure 5.5) and the relationship sequence (Figure 5.6) is important, but has not been reported in previous relationship research.

5.6 The Role of Trust in Relationship Development:

The prominent role of trust in theoretical relationship marketing papers and some empirical research (Table 2.5) is in contrast to the lack of trust being reported as a relationship development factor within these cases. The current literature is summarised prior to reporting on the analysis of case study responses on the role of trust in relationship development, to explain the difference between this research and previous articles.

Trust is defined as a “reliance on and confidence in the truth, worth, reliability of a person or thing” (Collins English Dictionary, p. 1651). Trust has been variously defined in the marketing literature, however the Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpande (1992) definition is finding wide acceptance. They define trust as, “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.” (p. 315). Trust is also accepted as a central concept for relationship marketing.

The literature is replete with references to the role of trust, however two key questions remain unanswered:

- 1) Is trust a prerequisite to a relationship or a derived construct?
- 2) Does trust have different roles during the relationship development and relationship maintenance period of a relationship?

Trust at the beginning of a relationship is reflected in one exporter's comments:

“I’m so naive I go in trusting until proven otherwise ... I don’t really think someone builds a level of trust, I always give you the benefit of the doubt and then you lose it or maintain it. Maybe that’s just my naivety. I really go into every opening relationship thinking everything’s going to be great -- or people wouldn’t go into it and if you don’t go into that with that attitude, why pursue it?” (HC2)

However, even among the case studies in this research, this perspective was reflected by only one importer.

The prerequisite versus derived construct debate has been aired in articles over a number of years. Swan & Noble (1985) conceptualised trust as a construct which is developed in a relationship. The development of trust as a process or as a result of antecedent variables, rather than a prerequisite, has been supported by Young & Wilkinson (1989); Anderson & Narus (1990); Hallén, Johanson & Seyed-Mohamed (1991); Anderson & Weitz (1992); Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman (1993); Ganesan (1994); Jackson (1994); Morgan & Hunt (1994); Wilson & Jantrania (1994); Wray, Palmer & Bejou (1994); Berry (1995); Dion, Easterling & Miller (1995); Wilson (1995); Sheaves & Barnes (1996); Kozak & Cohen (1997); Simpson & Mayo (1997); and, LaBahn & Kohli (1997).

The preponderance of these authors utilising trust as a developed construct or the result of other relationship variables should indicate a sound foundation for the derived construct argument, however, these authors frequently mention the alternate view in their literature review and limitations:

“Trust, however, may play a larger role in business relationships by acting as a determinant of each participant’s involvement, communications and other process factors. This study does little to quell this controversy ...:

LaBahn & Kohli (1997, p. 507)

Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpande (1992), whose definition of trust is widely quoted, utilised trust as an antecedent of market research usage in established relationships, proving an indirect link between trust and using research data. However, the following year they published another paper Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman (1993) with trust being derived from other relationship variables rather than a separate independent variable. Thus they have empirically shown trust is a prerequisite and a derived construct, depending on the research context and relationship definition.

Perhaps the lack of separation of ‘developing’ and ‘ongoing’ relationships within the empirical research has led to an inability to resolve this debate. Rosson & Ford (1982) recognised that, “... it is important to distinguish between ‘establishment’ and ‘maintenance’ functions in manufacturer-distributor relationships” (p. 58). A review of the literature reveals a predominance of ‘maintenance’ relationships in the empirical findings, but little focus on the development process.

Empirical research of ongoing (maintenance) relationships has proven the role of trust as a derived construct or outcome of relationship activities: Young & Wilkinson (1989); Anderson & Narus (1990); Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman (1993); Ganesan (1994); Morgan & Hunt (1994); Wray, Palmer & Bejou (1994); Dion, Easterling & Miller (1995); Kozak & Cohen (1997); Simpson & Mayo (1997); and, LaBahn & Kohli (1997).

The role of trust in relationship development has yet to move beyond the conceptual stage. Trust does not appear in the relationship development model derived from my research interviews (Figure 5.5). It was mentioned in the context of the need to 'develop trust' by two importers and an exporter, while another importer sought to have dyad members 'trust each other'. These responses support trust as a concept derived during the relationship development process. Intuitively, trust is built during relationship development and reaches full importance during relationship maintenance - an application of Wilson's (1995) active and latent constructs in different relationship contexts.

Within the context of this case study, the respondents were asked "How do you develop and build your relationship with your international customer/supplier?" The minimal unprompted mentioning of trust during the exporter and importer interviews within the thirty-six dyads indicates that trust may not be a key influence on relationship development, but rather a construct being developed in parallel with the initial relationship. This view is supported by the comments of an exporter:

"A trust relationship comes out of the fact that we are doing an awful lot of business with them and we start to focus on them. It will take a natural progression and evolution in the relationship."

A later question, "How important is trust to customer/supplier relationships?" prompted responses that trust, as a component of an ongoing exporter-importer relationships, is strongly supported by the respondents. Responses included: "absolutely important", "imperative", "trust is everything", "critical" and many "very important" comments. Additional comments relevant to ongoing relationships included:

"If no relationship of trust ... your business would stop." (exporter)

"It's all you have ... You can always lie once." (importer)

"Mutual trust needs to be strong."

(importer)

"If I can't trust a company there is no point in going forward."

(importer)

The centrality of trust to the relationship and the very strong reaction to a breach of trust was brought out by one exporter:

"I chased a particular guy from Munich to Taiwan and Hong Kong ... and all I (wanted) to do was belt him on the nose because ... he duded me on a trust issue."

Two factors reduced the importance of trust to a dyad partner: 1) some importers (Japanese) found it difficult to trust foreign suppliers; and, 2) some exporters and importers conduct business on a purely transaction basis, not seeking a relationship until a threshold level of sales was achieved:

"My experience has led me to believe that the sole basis of a relationship is on the commercial viability of that relationship, and trust develops thereafter."

The interviewee responses to questions regarding relationship development and the role of trust reveal that trust has a central role within the ongoing exporter-importer relationship, but that it is not critical during the relationship development process. Rather, trust itself is being developed in conjunction with the relationship based on other relationship factors:

"Repeatedly shipping good quality with a fair price -- over time trust is built"

(HC19)

The central role of trust is evoked after trust is established and it may act as a transition trigger for moving into an established long-term relationship. This is consistent with the empirical work of Ganesan (1994) which found *"that creating trust could be related to actual behaviours within the specific relationship"* (p. 10).

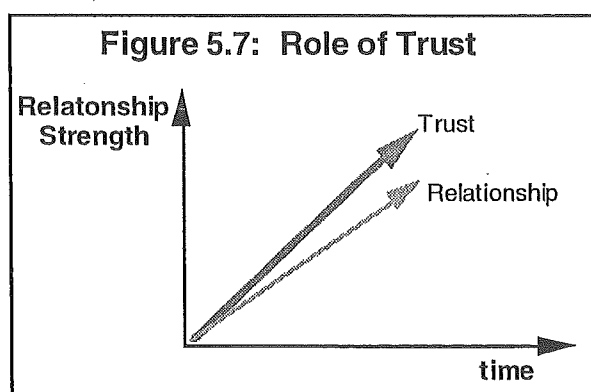
5.7 Summary:

This chapter has focused on the relationship development process, as reported in the case studies. The theoretical concept of relationship stages models are not supported by my qualitative analysis, while the objective classification of relationship stages (based on 3-year sales growth) bears little resemblance to the perceptions of the exporter and importer.

A major finding of this research is the primary role of quality products in initiating and developing relationships. Research participants have clearly indicated that it requires both product and exporter performance, in addition to partner interaction, to develop relationships. I have proposed an alternate relationship development model (Figure 5.3) based on analysis of the case study data. This is the first appearance of 'product performance' as a relationship development component within relationship models.

The primary role of the product early in the relationship is confirmed by the analysis of the sequence of different types of relationships (product, organisational, personal). This analysis also indicated that there are alternate paths to developing relationships and this highlights the need for exporters to share information with their customers, to determine which approach is suitable for the specific relationship. Relationships which did not develop beyond the product component were negative relationships which continued based on product quality and/or profitability.

Finally, the absence of trust as a factor influencing relationship development was analysed. Analysis of the case data reveals that trust is a derived construct which is being built during the relationship development process, rather than a prerequisite to, or factor influencing, relationship development. Schematically this can be represented as depicted in Figure 5.7.



I propose that trust may be a trigger for transition from relationship development into relationship maintenance, linking with the empirical findings that trust is a key component of ongoing relationships.

In summary, this chapter provides new insights into the complex nature of exporter-importer dyadic relationships and highlights areas where the exporter should focus additional effort to develop their relationships.

Chapter 6: Quality Relationships

Chapter Outline

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Quality Relationships

6.2.1 Quality Relationships Defined

6.2.2 Building Quality Relationships

6.3 Relationship Strength Perceptions

6.3.1 Exporter-Importer Perceptions of Relationship Strength

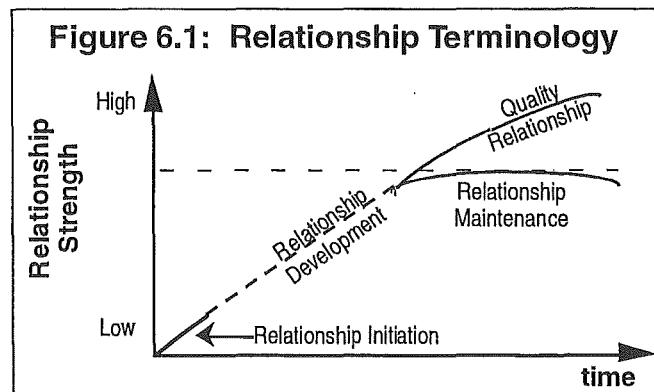
6.3.2 Factors Influencing Relationship Strength

6.4 Summary

Chapter 6: Quality Relationships

6.1 Introduction:

Exporter-importer dyadic relationships moving beyond the development period either mature or continue to grow until a quality relationship develops. This chapter addresses two aspects of these relationships: what is a quality relationship and which factors influence its formation; and, measurement of the status of developing relationships using relationship strength. These terms, as used in this study, are shown in Figure 6.1.



The concept of a ‘quality relationship’ attempts to capture the ‘very best’ relationships which are recognised as being superior to others. What constitutes relationship quality¹³ is still emerging in the literature and there is limited agreement on its dimensions. The value of relationship quality was commented upon by Weun & Trocchia (1996):

“... service providers who maintain high levels of relationship quality with their customers can expect those customers to be more forgiving when the service provider makes a mistake.” (p. 228).

Relationship strength is a relatively new concept which endeavours to measure the robustness of the relationship. Conceptually it positions the current relationship on a

¹³ Relationship quality and a quality relationship are inadequately defined in the literature. For the purposes of this study, these terms are treated as being equivalent and interchangeable.

scale from non-relationship opportunistic transactions, through fragile new relationships, to quality relationships.

The concepts explored in this chapter are still developing and there are no generally accepted empirically-based definitions to clarify their meaning. The purpose of this chapter is to gain insight into how these concepts are understood by those involved in business relationships, to provide a foundation for further academic enquiry.

6.2 Quality Relationships:

“And there’s nothing worse ... (than) they sell you a product and when there’s a problem you can’t find the mongrels. The faceless men disappear behind their secretaries and they can’t be contacted...”

(AC14)

This section examines two aspects of a quality relationship: first, it draws upon the marketing literature and case study data to understand what is meant by a ‘quality relationship’ (Section 6.2.1); and second, the case study data are analysed to determine how relationship quality is built within these dyads (Section 6.2.2), shedding light on the requirements for exporters seeking to achieve a quality relationship with their international partners.

6.2.1 Quality Relationships Defined:

The concept of a ‘quality relationship’ or ‘relationship quality’ emerged in the late 1980’s (for example, see Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987) and has been the focus of a few studies in the 1990’s. Crosby, Evans and Cowles (1990) studied relationship quality in the context of selling, concluding that , “Relationship quality serves as an indicator of the health and future well being of ... relationships” and “... relationship quality contributes to a lasting bond by offering assurance that the salesperson will continue to meet the customers expectations (satisfaction), and not knowingly distort information or otherwise subvert the customers interests (trust)” (p.76). For their empirical research, “... relationship quality is viewed as a higher-order construct composed of at least two dimensions, (1) trust in the salesperson and (2) customer satisfaction with the

salesperson.” (p.70). This conceptualisation of relationship quality has been utilised by Lagace, Dahlstrom and Gassenheimer (1991), Wray, Palmer and Bejou (1994), and Leuthesser (1997).

Table 6.1: Relationship Quality Variables							
Crosby, Evans & Cowles (1990)	Lagace, Dahlstrom & Gassenheimer (1991)	Johnson, Sakano, Cote & Onzo (1993)	Wray, Palmer & Bejou (1994)	Palmer & Bejou (1994)	Weun & Trocchia (1996)	Leuthesser (1997)	Dorsch, Swanson & Kelley (1998)
Satisfaction Trust	Satisfaction Trust	Satisfaction Cooperation Relationship Stability	Satisfaction Trust	Duration	Trustworthiness Intellectual Modesty Accessibility Enthusiasm Caring	Satisfaction Trust	Satisfaction Trust Customer Orientation Ethics Minimal Opportunism Comfort

Variations of this conceptualisation have been used by Johnson, Sakano, Cote and Onzo (satisfaction, cooperation, and relationship stability; 1993), Palmer and Bejou (duration; 1994), and, Dorsch, Swanson and Kelley (satisfaction, trust, customer orientation, ethics, minimal opportunism, and commitment; 1998).

Only Weun and Trocchia (1996) used empirical evidence to build their own relationship quality scale, including trustworthiness, intellectual modesty, accessibility, enthusiasm, and caring. However, they caution that this scale may be specific to teacher/student relationships.

Academically, relationship quality has been defined as “a high-order construct consisting of several distinct, although related dimensions”, however, “there is no consensus on which dimensions make up relationship quality.” (Dorsch, Swanson & Kelley, 1998, p. 130).

Rather than utilise one of the existing theoretical concepts of relationship quality this study sought to understand what relationship quality meant to international business people. To provide an unprompted response as an empirical basis for defining relationship quality, exporters and importers were asked, “How do you define relationship quality?” Case study participants quickly grasped the concept of relationship quality, although the terminology was new to most of them. The few

respondents requiring guidance were prompted to consider what made their very best relationships different. The following extracts are representative of the responses from the exporters:

“What does relationship quality mean to me? The level of communication and mutual trust. If you have that underlying framework, on the emotional side, all the other trade barriers or commercial barriers will get resolved fairly quickly -- they become very unimportant at the end of the day.” (A4)

“We look for a personal relationship -- I think it helps tremendously when you have problems. It allows you to set up a non-confrontational framework where you are willing to discuss the problem with the person, with an open mind. It also has to do with wanting to extend the relationship. So, if you have got a situation where you find a customer losing money through no fault of his own, we are going to find any way to help him because we want him there next year and the year after. We do not want to lose the relationship we have established.

So you have a relationship with someone: a trading relationship; or, a trading and personal relationship -- that is what I refer to as the quality of the relationship.” (H1)

“I think mutual trust comes into it -- it is a major component. It is a very difficult question. We have tended to take it for granted but now you try to quantify it, it is difficult. The ability to communicate through the good and bad times, through the problems and a commitment to work those problems which invariably arise and form part of the business. The difference between a quality relationship and a poor one is the ability to work through the issues and having a commitment to do so.”(H1, different respondent)

“There certainly has got to be trust there. If you test it, you need to have your agent work a loss or no-profit deal, and if they are happy to do that

because of your relationship, then you have a strong one. And it works both ways, we should do the same.

The term is not very solid. The longer the relationship, the quality of the relationship should improve, but it doesn't really follow of course. It may even get worse with time. But there is a time element." (H2)

Importer comments include both product and exporter factors:

"Three things: quality of product, number one; quality of manager; level of trust.

The current buzzword is 'partnering' and all the top five people we basically are partnering on -- I despise the term, but that's basically what it is. We trust them to put the very best in the box. We provide the service side of it, they provide the merchandise side of it. Together we hope to be a great team. (HC2)

"Probably there are several things -- I'm not going to put one more important than the other. Number one, they have a steady supply of quality product that we have a market for. Coupled with that is that they have the proper regard and respect for the relationship between the two companies, such that they work their business through us as their representative. So these are the things which will be important -- one is the product and the other is the relationship." (HC7)

"I believe it's trust, dependability, and they've got a commitment to customer focus. The people I deal with in New Zealand, they're in for the long haul." (HC13)

"Difficult question. It depends on personalities and our perception and desire to build a relationship. Owner-type company is easier to do business with as they never change owner and it is easier to establish a

long-term relationship. The feeling about and character of the owner, assessed by us to build a top quality relationship.” (HC14)

“Commitment fulfilment, product quality, claim handling and support. Comprehensive completion of these as part of the cycle of business. Quality reflects personality. Exporters who say, honestly ‘This is capacity and we cannot over-commit’, we will buy from those exporters whenever possible. Personality and personal characteristics are reflected in the quality.” (HC21)

“A guy who understands our customers -- he understands who we’re marketing towards and he never tries to sell us product that don’t fit into our market. The other thing I guess with those particular suppliers is the innovative way of bringing about changes to their products. There would be 5~10 of those suppliers of mine that are working closely with me to get the product right. And as soon as I have a ‘sniff’ of a problem they are on my doorstep or faxing, or getting it resolved. I think it is that back-up service that you feel so confident with.” (AC14)

Consistent themes emerged across the dyads, however not all responses had the same emphasis as this quote from Japan indicates:

“Interpersonal relationship itself does not work. Must be based on the numbers, that is, it must be economic. This is the minimum requirement. Everything builds on that.

Following economic viability, establish an interpersonal relationship with an influential person in the company -- top management or owner. Need to develop a comfortable relationship, that is, based on trust and with open communication of issues related to money and problems. Supplier must fulfil the commitments and promises made.

If commitment cannot be met, explain prior to the problem being identified and bring an alternate approach and ideas. Lead time is a

most important factor. Delivery commitment influences relationship quality.” (AC8)

The frequency of mention of various quality factors are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Quality Relationship Factors					
Relationship Quality Factors	Exporter Responses (n = 9)	Importer Responses			
		Total (n = 36)	Australia (n = 14)	U.S.A. (n = 9)	Japan (n = 13)
Trust & Mutual Understanding	9	15	4	3	8
Product Quality	2	10	3	3	4
Character/Personality	1	9	2	1	6
Open Communication	5	8	3	3	2
Balanced/Mutual Profit	3	7	2	3	2
Attitude/Desire	0	7	0	3	4
Flexibility/Responsiveness	1	6	4	0	2
Supplier Support	3	6	5	0	1
Commitment	1	6	1	3	2
Personal Bonding	4	5	2	0	3
Dependable/Reliable	1	5	4	1	0
On-time Delivery	1	5	2	1	2
Price Competitive	0	5	2	1	2

Trust and mutual understanding, a vendor-related factor similar in nature to mutual trust and knowledge (Chapter 4), is the most frequently mentioned quality relationship factor. All exporters and 42% of importers mentioned this factor as part of a quality relationship and this finding is consistent with empirical research (e.g.: LaBahn & Kohli, 1997). Exporters mentioned trust and mutual understanding nearly twice as frequently as the second mentioned factor, open communication, and importers revealed a strong emphasis on this factor in their relationship perceptions.

Product quality, a neglected aspect of relationship development, emerges as the second most frequently mentioned overall factor by importers. These two frequently mentioned factors appear to have an ongoing influence, from partner search to quality relationships, and this finding reinforces the close linkage between marketing mix decisions and business relationships, within these case studies.

Intercompany interaction factors become more important within relationship quality. Only one intercompany interaction factor was included in the ‘top 10’ for relationship development, however they are first, fourth, fifth equal and tenth equal as components of relationship quality. That is, they have emerged as active variables in the quality relationship construct.

Personal characteristics of the exporter (character/personality, attitude/desire) are important to the importer, emphasising the personal dimension of superior relationships. This is consistent with the transition from a product relationship to a personal relationship found in the relationship development process (see Figure 5.6).

“... differences between numbers and the interpersonal relationship. If the company only looks at the figures, you cannot have a good relationship ...”

“Something more than money that goes between them.”

What constitutes a quality relationship appears to have a country dimension which was not apparent in the relationship development process, however this was not statistically verified due to the small sample size.

Japanese importers clearly mentioned ‘mutual understanding (61% of participants) and the exporter’s ‘character/personality’ (46%) more frequently than all other relationship quality factors. Attitude/desire, the highest ranked (Japanese) relationship development factor continues to influence, as does product quality. The emergence of ‘personal bonding’ emphasises the personal dimension of interactions for some Japanese importers.

Perhaps the popular myth about building personal relationships prior to doing business in Japan emerged from studying ongoing, quality relationships rather than the relationship development process, leading to a misunderstanding of the timing of the importance of ‘personal bonding’. The personal dimensions of Japanese relationships becomes active later in the relationship, within these case studies.

Australian importers appear to be more practical, valuing supplier support, flexibility, dependability and trust in their best relationships. Attitude, which receives no mentions from the Australian importers, reveals a cultural variation to the Japanese and American importers where it continues to be important to quality relationships.

“Their ability to compete in the market place. To provide long lines of consistent quality and to be dependable and cooperative. And to have a certain strength behind them that enables them to do those things and

still be profitable at their own level, while providing us with a service and product that enables us to sell their product and be profitable.”
(HC12)

American importers blend trust, quality, communication, shared profit and attitude, with equal frequency, into quality relationships, however no factor holds a dominant position in the collective perspectives of study participants. Two of the most frequently mentioned factors in Australia (flexibility, supplier support) received no mentions in the US, and dependability, another frequently mentioned Australian factor, received only a single US mention. This reveals important differences across Western business practices, within close relationships. Personal bonding, important in Japan, received no US mentions.

Both exporter and importer recognise a need for trust and mutual understanding, but beyond that the exporters’ perceptions of a quality relationship are not aligned with the importer (see Table 6.3) collectively, or individually. Exporters emphasise intercompany factors while importers include product and exporter personality items, which are potentially more difficult to modify.

The lack of common perceptions, beyond the importance of trust and mutual understanding, reveals considerable opportunity for relationship improvement. This improvement is complicated by country variations which influence the process of gaining understanding and building quality relationships.

Table 6.3: Most Frequently Mentioned Quality Relationship Factors	
Exporters	Importers
Trust & Mutual Understanding	Trust & Mutual Understanding
Open Communication	Product Quality
Personal Bonding	Character/Personality

The value of a quality relationship is revealed in how the dyad partners respond to and manage during problems and times of stress.

“When things are particularly difficult ... that tests your relationship.”

“The ability to communicate through the good and bad times ...”

Based on the unprompted dyad partner responses, the initial theoretical conceptualisation of relationship quality is somewhat supported, but revealed to be inadequate to capture the complexity of this ‘higher-order construct’. Satisfaction, an important conceptual variable does not appear as an important variable in these unprompted responses.

The quality relationship factors identified by case study participants are remarkably consistent with the relationship development groupings previously identified, although the importance of these factors does vary. This consistency suggests that it may be useful to treat relationship quality as an extension of the relationship development process through the ‘normal’ relationship maintenance zone into a special group known as ‘quality relationships’ (as depicted in Figure 6.1).

6.2.2 Building Quality Relationships:

As a higher-order construct relationship quality cannot be managed directly. Thus, identifying and understanding the relative importance of the underlying dimensions influencing relationship quality becomes important to dyad partners seeking to create quality relationships. Knowledge of these factors is valuable for informed decisions on how to meet the importer’s needs in terms of creating quality relationships and to determine which relationships the exporter considers warrants the incremental cost of this effort.

Factors influencing relationship quality which have been empirically studied include:

- similarity, service domain expertise, and relationship selling behaviour (Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990);
- ethical behaviour, expertise, interaction frequency, and duration (Lagace, Dahlstrom & Gassenheimer, 1991);
- use of power (Johnson, Sakano, Cote & Onzo, 1993);
- empathetic orientation, perceived selling orientation, and ethical credibility (Palmer & Bejou, 1994);

- selling orientation, customer orientation, ethics, duration, and expertise (Wray, Palmer & Bejou, 1994); and
- relationship behaviour (initiating, signalling, disclosing) interaction (frequency, richness), and offering quality (Leuthesser, 1997).

Significant linkages have been found between these wide-ranging factors and the various conceptualisation's of relationship quality, however, linking diverse factors to an under-defined concept leaves questions as to the veracity of the results.

To 'shed light' on the business practices employed within dyads, exporters and importers were asked, "How do you build relationship quality?" The following transcript extracts are representative of the dyad responses:

"Not to put the cart before the horse, the most important thing is to have a product that offers sales potential or market potential. ... He needs to make a commitment to support sales development of that product in the market place. It has to be something that is going to augment what they are doing in their own domestic market." (AC3)

"Don't make promises you cannot keep; perform against sales quote and delivery date. We do not seek the fastest or the cheapest, but we expect our suppliers to do what they say they will do." (AC1)

"To build a quality relationship requires delivery commitment and the sample to be the same as the delivered product. Relationships are built on those two factors. Price is usually predetermined by the market, therefore other factors are key to building the relationship." (AC8)

"We have to communicate on a regular basis and to me communicate means by phone. I like to talk one-to-one."

I just want you to be truthful and honest and tell me what is going on. And you, as a supplier, have to be well informed with your market -- you have to know what your competitors are doing."

Communication and trust. The trust part being that what you tell me is what you truly understand and believe, because that's how I'm going to make my decision." (AC1)

"Performance of business requirements. Social relationship development. It is the same as a romance -- if a high quality, both parties find the channel. If each find the channel, the relationship will grow and quality will be high." (HC10)

The dyad partner responses are summarised in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Quality Relationship Development Process					
Relationship Quality Development Factors	Exporter Responses (n = 9)	Importer Responses			
		Total (n = 36)	Australia (n = 14)	U.S.A. (n = 9)	Japan (n = 13)
Product Quality	1	12	3	3	6
Keeping Promises	2	9	2	3	4
Marketable Product	0	8	1	4	3
Delivery Performance	2	7	3	2	2
Price Stability/Issues	1	6	1	1	4
Consistent Supply	0	6	3	1	2
Time	4	5	3	0	2
Flexibility	0	5	1	3	1
Joint Planning	0	5	0	3	2
Product Consistency	0	4	2	1	1
Visits	7	1	0	0	1
Honesty/Fairness	6	2	1	1	1
Communications	5	3	1	1	0
Social Interaction - Personalisation	5	1	0	0	1

Eight factors (57%) in Table 6.4 appear in the relationship development process (Table 5.3) indicating a strong linkage between developing 'normal' and quality relationships. Five factors (36%) in Table 6.4 appear in the quality relationship definition table (Table 6.2), with four factors (product quality, communication, delivery, competitive price) appearing in various forms in all three tables. The continuity of these factors reinforces the concept of a quality relationship being a continuation of the relationship development process which was proposed at the beginning of this chapter (Figure 6.1). This linkage and the transition of some factors from latent to active or active to latent status is valuable to export decision making.

Quality relationship development factors (Table 6.4) do not exhibit the same level of country variability found in the definition of a quality relationship (Table 6.2), however some differences exist. Intuitively, this would indicate that there are emerging differences in relationship requirements as the relationship builds towards a closer, long-term commitment. As the relationship strengthens and moves towards a 'maintenance' state, continuity towards a quality relationship may depend on recognising the changing status of specific factors and the country variations in what a quality relationship means.

The most striking finding is that the exporter's perception of what is important to developing a quality relationship is at such variance to the importers. Only one item, time, is mentioned in the importer's 'top 10' factors, and this is not manageable by the exporter. Only three of the importer's 'top 10' receive more than one mention by exporters, and five received no mention at all! This indicates a serious gap in understanding of what is important to the relationship. It also contrasts with the personal, knowledgeable relationship the exporter is trying to create.

"You have people who are a little bit special. I think it goes beyond the workplace. A personal interest in the person himself and his interests, his family, his background, his history, the whole thing. You can't do that with everyone, all the time." (H2)

The absence of product performance and exporter performance related factors in the exporters' responses highlights the difference in perceptions between dyad partners, on what is important to create quality relationships. Without clear understanding, the exporter cannot focus attention on what the importer deems important and create a superior relationship. This lack of mutual understanding also represents a barrier to achieving a quality relationship as mutual understanding is the most frequently mentioned part of both exporters' and importers' quality relationship definition.

"That is a very good question. There's probably two or three levels on that. We go out for dinner, we socialise, we know each other personally very well, but you can't do that for 100 customers. It's got to be mutual respect -- they have respect for your knowledge of the products and ability to make things happen. The way you relate to them in the short

time you have, which is not to be superficial. Be genuine and be obviously prepared to go the extra mile. Get to understand their business, what they actually want, and try to get the body language going. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. You keep at it and it usually does.

I suppose it's mercenary really when you think about it, 'Look that guy is very important to me so next time he's out I'm going to take two or three days and take him sailing', or whatever. That's an actual business decision. It's awful. The guy who owned (another import company), I took him right around New Zealand for a week, we had a ball. My staff deal with them now -- never a problem. They just won't go past us because you had some fun with the guy who owns it." (H3)

The prominence of 'Visits' in exporter relationship strategy is reflected in an exporter's comments:

"We try to get them to New Zealand as soon as we can ... so we can personalise the relationship ... so that they feel an obligation to see the business through. That is where we win." (H4)

This approach has wisdom, however in the absence of meeting the importer's performance requirements, this approach is insufficient to create a quality relationship. Exporters must continue to ensure they *"do the basics well."*

Product and exporter performance items are frequently mentioned as importers' quality relationship development factors, highlighting that importers will not build strong, close relationships with exporters who cannot provide consistent, quality products which are marketable in the destination country.

The frequent mention of 'keeping promises' by both dyad members (22~25% of mentions) indicates existing problems within international dyadic relationships which are obstructing relationship quality development. If the exporter makes unrealistic promises or promises that they fail to keep, they are blocking the relationship development process. The product may be sufficient to 'carry' the exchange relationship during the product's life cycle, however the exporter misses the opportunity

to build a longer term relationship independent of the product -- they have failed to build on the *'runs on the board from one product'*.

The marketability of the product and the exporter's flexibility in responding to market needs continue to influence the relationship development process.

"Some companies do not change for 100 years; others change and adapt constantly."

'Delivery Performance' and 'Consistent Supply' remain important considerations, again indicating a performance hurdle for the exporter.

"There needs to be a flow-through from the supplier to the customer, therefore they need to deal with the whole channel."

Price stability and other pricing issues are also relationship barriers which must be overcome by the dyad partners. Stability of pricing is related to the exporter's willingness to commit a price to importers, in their own currency, and not transfer currency risk and demand pricing fluctuations to customers. This reflects a move from transactions to a customer-focused business approach. Japanese importers, in particular, seek price stability.

Joint planning emerges as a factor influencing higher quality relationships.

"Currently (exporter) only deals with the buyers ... therefore the correct process is not happening."

"It is very important to share and mutually discuss as it is a joint process to develop business in the market. (We) seek supplier involvement to improve the product and market."

The case study participant responses create a picture of importers who desire to work jointly with exporters to plan and develop opportunities for marketable products, however they will not commit time and effort for suppliers who have inconsistent product quality and supply problems, who are unreliable in keeping promises and inflexible in their approach. The message is very clear, but based on exporter responses, does not appear to be understood.

The top four exporter responses focus on visits to facilitate face-to-face communications and social interactions to personalise the relationship. Exporters perceive that they must be honest and fair in their business dealings to build strong relationships. However, importer responses indicate that exporters have already been successful in building a perception of fairness, but have not conveyed the message that they seek a relationship with the importer (see Table 6.5). Exporters continue to work in the area where they have succeeded and neglect the area where they perceive they have done well -- due to their lack of understanding of the importer's perspective. This is symptomatic of the overall gaps in relationship understanding.

6.3 Relationship Strength:

This study has increased our understanding of exporter-importer relationships as they are initiated, develop and progress through to quality relationships. The knowledge that some variables are important during all relational periods and that others move between active and latent status reveals a need to determine the current status of a relationship to understand which variables are important to strengthening that relationship. In this context, a relationship strength scale (Appendix 5) was utilised to measure the relationship between dyad partners.

In Figure 6.1 the change in the nature of the relationships implies a change in focus of decision making, for example, the questions importers ask during relationship initiation differ from those in a quality relationship. The scale used on this chart is 'relationship strength'. Relationship strength measures the cooperation or closeness of the relationship, its robustness or ability to withstand 'shocks'. A strong relationship is closer and more durable than a weaker relationship.

"It's like a marriage. When things are great, it's great and when they are tough they can be real tough. Those that have the strength of relationship to work through the tough times are the ones who have a successful marriage and those that don't end up getting divorced."

(HC2)

In this context, a quality relationship represents a special condition of high relationship strength, beyond that of the average relationship. A low relationship strength assessment is unrelated to a quality relationship.

Relationship strength has been used in a limited number of published articles. Hallén, Johanson & Mohamed (1987) linked relationship strength to stability in domestic and international markets, however relationship strength was not defined and they measured adaptation (structural bonds) and information sharing. Stability was defined as relationship duration.

Relationship strength has also been associated with salespersons influence (Weitz, 1978), network referrals (Reingen & Kernon, 1986), commitment (Gassenheimer, Calatone & Scully, 1995), and segmentation (Schijns & Schroder, 1996).

Olsen & Ellram (1997) portray relationship strength as a component of portfolio analysis of supplier relationships and suggest that it is a measure of the success of supplier relationship management. The weakness of this approach is its unidimensionality.

“The strength of the relationship describes the factors that creates bonds between two companies.”

(Olsen & Ellram, 1997, p. 107)

Finally, Fournier (1998) and Fournier & Yao (1997) drew on the psychology literature for measures of marriage relationship strength and applied these to the strength of the relationship between consumers and brands.

Within this research the strength of the relationship between dyad members was assessed using a dyadic version of an eleven-item scale developed by Spekman (1991) when measuring ‘cooperative trading relationships’. Spekman measured cooperation and relationship processes rather than specific actions (e.g.: joint marketing plans) as, “it is more important to establish the processes to deal effectively with change and problems when they occur” (Spekman, 1991, p. 6). Thus the supplier relationship questions were designed to assess the cooperation and robustness of the relationship, a goal consistent with the concept of relationship strength in this research.

6.3.1 Exporter-Importer Perceptions of Relationship Strength:

Relationships require two entities, therefore this research includes responses from both dyad members, responding on their specific dyadic relationship. This approach provides a basis for comparing perceptions of the same relationship and relating these to dyad performance or other measures.

The mean responses of dyad members on the eleven criteria are provided in Table 6.5. The paired *t*-Test reveals significant differences in four of the eleven paired responses. The importer has a higher level of trust in the fairness of the exporter (“We trust this customer/supplier to deal fairly with us”) than the exporter has in the importer. The importer ranks trust the highest of the eleven criteria, whereas the exporter ranks it sixth equal. Perhaps the fact that the importer has multiple sources of product makes the exporter more cautious about trusting the fairness of the importer.

Table 6.5: Relationship Strength Perceptions						
Attribute Ranking *		Relationship Strength Criteria	Response Means		t-Test **	Significance
Importer	Exporter		Importer	Exporter		
1	6 =	Trust Fairness	5.27	4.73	-2.217	0.040
2	10	Notification of Changes	5.16	3.55	-5.593	0.000
3	4	Willingness for Close Alliance	5.09	4.91	-0.797	-
4	2	Open Communication	5.06	5.21	0.588	-
5	6 =	Expects Long-term Business	4.97	4.73	-0.955	-
6	3	Solving Disagreements	4.81	5.00	0.902	-
7	9	Goal Compatibility	4.77	4.39	-1.196	-
8	1	Relationship Sought	4.68	5.24	2.231	0.033
9	5	Strong Sense of Loyalty	4.59	4.81	0.737	-
10	11	Intention Anticipation	4.23	3.52	-2.098	0.044
11	8	Resource Dedication	3.93	4.43	1.525	-
* = Rank based on response means						
** = Paired t-Test ($p < 0.05$)						

The importer has a higher perception of the adequacy of notification of changes which may affect them than the exporter, indicating that the exporter is striving to communicate information to the importer, but the importer is less likely to provide timely notification of changes. The exporter rated this at an average of 3.55 (6-point scale) and ranked it tenth out of eleven criteria, whereas the importer rated it second highest. This response difference validates the need for measuring both directions in the relationship.

The exporter actively seeks relationships (“This customer/supplier wants a partner-like relationship with us”), ranking this item number one. The response of the importer is significantly different (0.033) and they rate the exporter’s desire for a partner-like relationship much lower (ranked eighth). The exporter’s strong desire is either not communicated adequately or their actions are not supporting the words. The high importance placed on product performance and exporter performance as part of the relationship development process may indicate a lack of delivery against promises, thus undermining the relationship and leading to scepticism on the part of the importer. Regardless of cause, the importer either does not recognise the strength of the exporter’s desire for a partner-like relationship or the exporter’s actions negate any desire portrayed in dyad communications.

Both dyad members ranked the dyad members’ ability to ‘anticipate the others intentions’ quite low (ranked 10th and 11th) however, the exporter rated this criteria much lower than the importer. Both parties found their dyad partner somewhat unpredictable and this is an area where substantial improvement in dyad relationships is possible.

The differences in perception of the strength of the relationship continue the theme of a lack of common understanding within the dyads. The exporters appear to seek stable, long-term relationships based on loyalty, trust, communication and a personalised relationship. The importers portray a willingness to form a close alliance with the exporter, but do not perceive a desire by the exporter to have a relationship. These differences are compounded by the differences in understanding of factors influencing relationship initiation and development, indicating a mismatch in what actually constitutes a relationship. One importer described relationship strength this way:

“If sell ‘at risk’ and if price decreases, both share in the reductions. Have to work together in insecure price situations. Results will be found at the end of the season for the performance -- if profitable, share the profits. This relationship works well.” (HC21)

In this relationship, the profits from the season’s sales are shared between the exporter and importer, indicating a high level of trust and a strong relationship.

6.3.2 Factors Influencing Relationship Strength:

Data collected within the case study interviews provides an opportunity to conduct some preliminary analysis of variables which may influence relationship strength. Initially, correlation analysis was conducted to reveal which variables were or weren't associated with relationship strength and these are discussed in Section 6.3.2.2. Then, using relationship strength as the dependent variable, three multiple regressions models are used to confirm the significance of the variables and reveal the explained variation in the relationship strength measure (Section 6.3.2.3).

6.3.2.1 Correlation Analysis:

The correlation matrix for the variables expected to be associated with relationship strength is provided in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Correlation Matrix -- Relationship Strength							
	Relationship Strength (Importer)	Relationship Strength (Exporter)	Relationship Length	Customer Sales Growth (3 years)	Export Intensity	Satisfaction (Importer)	Satisfaction (Exporter)
Relationship Strength (Importer)	1.00						
Relationship Strength (Exporter)	0.17	1.00					
Relationship Length	0.07	0.08	1.00				
Customer Sales Growth (3 years)	0.20	0.13	-0.29	1.00			
Export Intensity	-0.14	-0.10	-0.04	0.19	1.00		
Satisfaction (Importer)	0.61**	0.07	0.22	0.15	-0.06	1.00	
Satisfaction (Exporter)	0.08	0.63**	-0.12	-0.03	0.10	0.12	1.00
** = p < 0.01 ; * = p < 0.05							

Conceptually, the exporters' and importers' perception of relationship strength should be closely aligned as they represent two perspectives of the same relationship. Within this sample, they are not significantly related ($r = 0.17$) indicating that they move

independent of each other. This also implies that, regardless of the exporter's perception of the closeness of the relationship, the importer is the only valid source of the importer's perception of the relationship.

Time received 5% of the exporters' and importers' mentions in terms of relationship development (Table 5.3). As relationships endure they have the opportunity to grow closer, thereby indicating a positive association between length and relationship strength. However, the length of the relationship is not associated with the importers' or exporters' relationship strength rating ($r = 0.07, 0.08$), indicating that time does not create a better relationship. Time may be necessary, but it is insufficient to create a stronger relationship.

The exporter's increasing financial dependence on exports, as measured by export intensity (export sales/total sales*100) should motivate the exporter to strengthen export relationships. Further, as customer sales growth continues the exporter should seek to improve customer relationships, indicating a positive association. Neither export intensity ($r = -0.14, -0.10$) nor customer sales growth ($r = 0.20, 0.13$) is significantly associated with the importers' or exporters' relationship strength perceptions. This indicates that relationship strength is measuring much more than the financial aspects of the dyad or that they are unrelated.

As the importer's 'satisfaction' with the exporter increases, their desire to improve the relationship should increase, indicating a positive association between these two measures. In this study satisfaction is the overall average of the importer's assessment of their satisfaction using the twenty-six supplier selection criteria (Appendix 5). Although this measure focuses primarily on product and vendor-related factors, it is considered sufficient for this exploratory analysis. Correlation analysis reveals a significant and positive association between importer's satisfaction and relationship strength measures ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$).

From an exporters' perspective it is reasonable to expect a similar positive association between the exporters' perception of the importers' satisfaction¹⁴ and their assessment of the relationship's strength. Analysis reveals a significant positive association ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$) indicating that these perceptions move in the same direction.

¹⁴ The exporter was asked to assess the importers' satisfaction on these measures.

Logically we can assume that the exporters' and importers' perception of the importers' satisfaction should be closely aligned as any problems should be discussed between the parties. However, as with the relationship strength measures (above), the exporter and importer satisfaction measures are not significantly associated ($r = 0.12$). The correlation of exporters' satisfaction perception with the importers' relationship strength and the importers' satisfaction with the exporters' relationship strength perception are not significant ($r = 0.08$, $r = 0.07$ respectively), confirming the lack of association between importer and exporter perceptions.

Although these correlations show a positive and close association between satisfaction and relationship strength, we should be cautious in suggesting that these are alternate measures for the same relationship, as revealed by the following case of low satisfaction and high relationship strength (H2-HC13):

H2-HC13, an established mature relationship, but the importer ceased buying from the exporter for the first time in 16 years due to dissatisfaction, *"they just 'took their eyes' right off the business. I personally feel they were not committed any more to export."*

The importer perceived difficulties within the management of the exporter, and the key importer personal relationship contact leaving the firm, disrupted the continuity of the business and raised questions about future direction. Thus, the importer became dissatisfied and moved to another exporter. The level of dissatisfaction is expressed in seven criteria being rated below the scale mid-point for satisfaction and two (personal selling, stable management) being rated at the minimum score.

This low level of satisfaction was sufficient to prompt a change of supplier, however from a business perspective, the exporter may regain the export sales. The underlying relationship strength measure reveals a strong relationship with all items measured at maximum (6-points) except 'anticipating future intentions'. The underlying relationship is still strong, however there has been a short-term disruption to the sales due to dissatisfaction with operational activities and communication.

This example indicates that relationship strength is a longer-term measure, with satisfaction measuring shorter-term variations within the overall relationship. This relationship may be sufficiently robust to withstand this temporary 'shock'.

6.3.2.2 Relationship Models:

To provide additional insight into the percentage of variation in relationship strength explained by other variables, relationship strength was regressed against relationship length, sales growth, and satisfaction. Separate models for importer and exporter ratings were regressed followed by a combined model using a quotient of importer and exporter ratings, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Importer's Strength Rating}}{\text{Exporter's Strength Rating}} = \text{Relationship Length (years)} + \text{Sales Growth (3-year average)} + \frac{\text{Importer's Satisfaction Rating}}{\text{Exporter's Satisfaction Rating}}$$

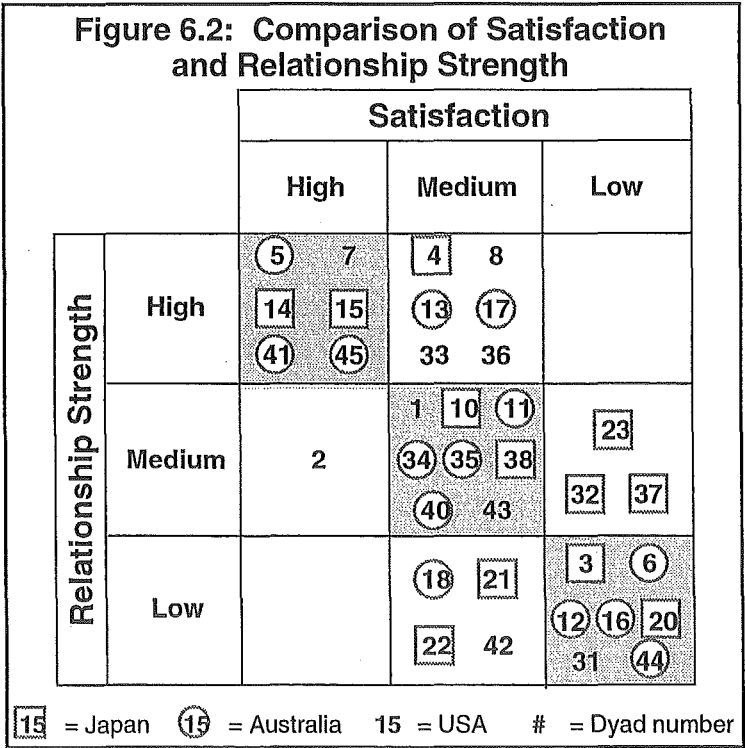
The results of these regressions are presented in Table 6.7:

Table 6.7: Relationship Strength Regression Models					
Relationship Model	R ²	Intercept	Beta Coefficients		
			Length	Growth	Satisfaction
1) Importer Relationship Strength	0.37	1.623	-0.074	-0.037	0.617
	(0.002)	(0.048)	(ns)	(ns)	(0.00)
2) Exporter Relationship Strength	0.44	0.180	0.192	0.077	0.647
	(0.001)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(0.00)
3) $\frac{\text{Importers Strength}}{\text{Exporters Strength}}$	0.46	1.176	-0.177	0.054	0.694
	(0.000)	(ns)	(ns)	(ns)	(0.00)

The explained variations in relationship strength (R²) are relatively high (0.37, 0.44, 0.46 for importer, exporter and ratio of exporter to importer) considering the simplicity of the model and that two of the variables were not significant. The lack of significant influence of customer sales growth and the length of the relationship on relationship strength, and thus the relationship development process as defined in this study, is a significant finding that raises questions about the use of these variables in other studies (e.g.: stability; Hallén, Johanson & Mohamed, 1987). It also indicates that we need to identify other variables which may influence relationship strength, as satisfaction was not mentioned in responses to open-ended questions, indicating that it may be masking other variables.

As revealed by the correlation analysis, satisfaction is the only significant independent variable within these models which is associated with the relationship strength rating. The strong association between satisfaction and relationship strength is partially explained by the satisfaction score being a composite of product and exporter relationship measures (based on the 26 selection criteria, Section 4.4.2), which were subsequently revealed to be key components of the relationship development process. Satisfaction, as a summary of twenty-six individual satisfaction ratings, is a composite measure and further analysis of the components of satisfaction (as defined here and in other studies) as they relate to relationship strength is required to understand which aspects of satisfaction directly influence the strength of the relationship. Further analysis of individual product and exporter measures was not feasible within this sample.

To provide additional insight into the association between satisfaction and relationship strength each dyad was allocated to a matrix depicting high, medium and low satisfaction and relationship strength (Figure 6.2).



The pattern of dyads lying on the diagonal reflects the correlation ($r = 0.61$) between the measures, however the number of dyads falling outside the diagonal indicates different timing of the effects of variables on dyad satisfaction and relationship strength.

Those dyads assessed as low/low (satisfaction/relationship strength) can be characterised as either:

- New or relatively new relationships (16, 20);
- Longer-term relationships in serious difficulty due to a lack of performance (6, 12, 31, 44); or,
- a change in personnel creating a 'relationship divorce' and the need to create a new relationship (12).

The lowest (importer) rated satisfaction dyad (31) reveals a dying relationship where the exporter is unaware of the perception differences (satisfaction: importer 2.9, exporter 3.8; relationship strength: 3.7, 5.7). The importer is 'waiting out' the expiration of a legal agreement prior to dissolving the arrangement due to incompatible objectives.

The lowest (importer) rated relationship strength dyad (44) reveals a common understanding of the status of the importer's satisfaction (importer 3.8, exporter 3.6) and the relationship strength (2.9, 3.0). This is a product-relationship (Figure 5.6) which has not been built into other relationship forms due to the exporter's lack of desire to change the relationship. This also indicates that low relationship strength may be a strategic choice by a dyad partner.

Dyads assessed as high/high can be characterised as either:

- Longer-term relationships with a mutual respect for each other (5, 7, 15, 41);
- Newer relationship which has benefited from 'referred trust' from an existing relationship (14); and/or,
- Mutually opportunistic relationships with a transaction volume focus (45).

Analysis of dyads lying outside the diagonal (HH, MM, LL) indicates that the timing of changes in satisfaction and relationship strength may differ. For one (H12) an almost exclusive importing relationship broke down due to a change of management at the exporter:

“... unfortunately they had a hiccup in their business and they were unable to replace them, virtually overnight, with people who we were confident in.”

This importer commented on the variability of satisfaction on a seasonal basis:

“... levels of satisfaction is based on the last season. ... In previous years it (satisfaction) would have been much higher because we had a very strong on-to-one relationship with the account manager.”

This decline in satisfaction was echoed by other importers (HC3, HC13). The size of variations in movements between satisfaction and relationship strength indicates episodic changes to satisfaction while the underlying relationship appears less influenced by individual events.

One dyad (H1-HC4) exhibits relationship strength growth exceeding the satisfaction perception. The importer gave a below average satisfaction rating for the exporter, but a maximum (6.0) relationship strength rating. This importer is one of two dyads who reported ‘person-to-person’ based supplier decisions and this preference allowed rapid relationship development due to the importer’s perception of the exporter:

“(Exporter) is easy to do business with. They create a ‘good feeling’ ... they have the same blood.”

This exporter had quickly established a superior relationship by matching the importer’s relationship expectations, in spite of below average importer satisfaction with ‘selection criteria’ performance.

These dyads indicate that, although satisfaction and relationship strength may be associated, they are not the same construct and they may change at different speeds in different circumstances.

6.4 Summary:

This chapter extends the explanation of dyadic relationships through examining the difference between 'normal' ongoing relationships and those representing quality relationships, investigating how 'quality' is achieved, and then examining the influence of various factors on perceptions of dyadic relationship strength.

A quality relationship represents a close business relationship where product quality is maintained by exporters and importers who openly communicate, have a personal relationship in response to the exporter's attitude, character and performance, and, there is a mutuality between dyad partners. The quality of the relationship has a positive influence on problem resolution when difficulties occur. Analysis indicates cultural variability in what defines relationship quality.

Relationship quality is built through product performance (quality, marketable product, consistency) and exporter performance (keeping promises, delivery performance, price, flexibility). The factors deemed important in relationship quality development differ from those which define a quality relationship, indicating a performance threshold to break out of normal ongoing relationships (ie: relationship maintenance) to achieve quality relationships.

Dyad partner relationship strength perception analysis reveals some significant differences in perceptions of the relationship, particularly with regard to notifying changes and anticipating intentions of the other party. They also exhibit different perceptions of the level of trust in the dyad partners' fairness and the exporters' desire to establish a relationship.

Satisfaction is the only major influence on relationship strength revealed in the data available within these case studies. However, as a composite measure was used, more analysis is required to understand the dynamics of this linkage. Relationship strength builds independent of the length of the relationship and sales growth.

An important theme emerging from the analysis in this chapter is the differences in perceptions of the dyad relationship by the two partners in that relationship. This holds for their definition of a quality relationship (Table 6.2), the quality relationship development process (Table 6.4) and perceptions of relationship strength (Table 6.6). These differences are particularly large and relevant in the quality relationship

development process and may form an important barrier to dyads building beyond the 'normal' relationship maintenance level. If there is a lack of agreement on the quality development process, the exporters' efforts will not influence the importers' perceptions as these efforts are focused on factors other than those the importer considers important. The only solution is for a 'meeting of the minds' through open, honest communication.

In summary, this chapter sheds new light on relationship quality and relationship strength as perceived by business people engaged in international exchange. The case study analysis reveals new insight which can be tested for generalisability in future quantitative research.

Chapter 7: Brand Perceptions

Chapter Outline

- 7.1 Introduction**
- 7.2 Exporters' Perceptions Of Brands:**
 - 7.2.1 Outdoor Apparel:**
 - 7.2.2 Horticulture:**
- 7.3 Importers' Perceptions Of Export Brands:**
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Chapter 7: Brand Perceptions

“Our competitive advantage ... is that we are a high quality producer of product. ... there is absolutely no way we can compete on price ... I put more emphasis on brand than many other people ... A buyer will recognise that, as a premium label out of New Zealand, they will buy it with confidence and ... we can achieve a premium over our competitors because of our consistency in the past.”

New Zealand Horticulture Exporter (H2)

7.1 Introduction:

While there are many articles in the popular press about the success of exporting branded products, empirical research on the importance of brands in the international marketing mix is limited. Early research (Koh & Robicheaux, 1988) found that brand names did not appear to influence export profitability. However, more recent work (Kim & Chung, 1997), comparing the relative importance of brand and country-of-origin effects found ‘brand popularity’ to be an important component of brand equity and market share. The country-of-origin of products also has an influence with some brands being associated with specific countries (Shimp, Samice & Madden, 1993). These studies were based on the perceptions of exporters only. A recent conceptual article (Keller, 1993), advocates the adoption of a customer-based perspective on brand equity, arguing that “...high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice, as well as produce greater consumer loyalty and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions”. Implicit in this line of argument is that there are indeed significant differences between the exporters’ and the importers’ perceptions of the role of brands.

The objectives of this component of the exploratory case study were to: introduce a new context of brand marketing; develop an understanding of the different perspectives on brand importance within exporter-importer dyads; and, conduct preliminary tests on a number of hypotheses suggested as the basis of further research. As more areas of international commerce revert to commodity-like trading, branding is one means by which producers can seek to differentiate their product and so avoid becoming price-

takers. However there has been relatively little international research into branding as part of the international marketing mix and none which has involved both exporters and importers of the products concerned. Much of the popular literature is devoted to relatively few global fast-moving-consumer-goods brands owned by very large multinational firms. These brands extend across the globe through direct foreign investment or strategic alliances. However there is another relatively neglected stratum where branding is important and this is addressed in this study.

The context of this research stems from the small domestic market available to New Zealand producers. This compels growth-oriented firms to enter overseas markets but denies many of them the scale of operation needed to obtain unit costs that are competitive on world markets. The same lack of scale also means that most New Zealand's exporters lack the financial resources to support foreign direct investment or the formation of major alliances. They and many other niche exporters around the world are left with the option of entering international markets through the traditional exporter-importer relationship. It is in this context that brand perceptions are explored.

The apparel industry is very brand conscious with several global brands (eg., Pierre Cardin, Lacoste, Benneton). In addition there are many regional brands which have local value but no international standing. New Zealand firms manufacture good quality outdoor apparel but without the scale and financial strength needed to establish a global brand.

"I think we are not big enough in a lot of these product groups to really use branding in any sort of significant way. ... As an individual exporter we don't make enough money and the volume throughput that we do is too small."

(H4)

The literature of the marketing of fresh produce is particularly sparse and more so with respect to issues of branding (Aksoy & Kaynak, 1994). Horticultural exports are generally categorised as commodity products, although a few international brands do exist (eg., Sunkist, Dole, Chiquita) due to huge promotional budgets sustained over many years. New Zealand does have some natural advantages as a producer of horticulture (space, climate, seasonal differences to Northern hemisphere), however New Zealand horticulture exporters do not own their own orchards and do depend on various independent growers and packhouses for the quality of the export product.

The following two sections include a representative selection of perceptions from the interviews. Due to the rarity of dyadic research I believe that the words of the exporters and importers are the best ones to explain their perceptions of brands. Another benefit of drawing on this material is that it provides a basis for the more general hypotheses formulated later in the chapter.

7.2 Exporters' Perceptions Of Brands:

7.2.1 Outdoor Apparel:

The general expectation that brands would be perceived as very important was confirmed in the interviews. Here are four extracts, one from each exporter:

"...we do not sell product, we sell the brand. We define what the brand means and we sell that.... If no brand, no overseas sales as there is no perceived competitive advantage... the brand means quality." (A1)

"(an established brand)is now essential to the long term growth within your own market and if you can sell it extensively overseas then it commands its own place in the market and you can get the price you want for it and all the other benefits." (A2)

"... we have been trying to sell product with no brand recall at all and we found the only thing we were doing is inviting people for a conversation as to price. The just wanted it cheaper." (A3)

"Brands give you credibility as a company in respect of your business-to-business relationships. They are absolutely critical. Not necessarily so in the business-to-consumer, because they are unaware of the brand in the first place." (A4)

It is quite clear from these brief extracts that brands are perceived to be of vital importance, standing between a differentiated high-margin product and a price-taking commodity offering. The perceived importance of brands was reinforced by a contract

manufacturer losing a major non-brand export customer (up to 63% of export sales) subsequent to the research interviews.

7.2.2 Horticulture:

Here the perceived importance of the produce brand as a conveyor of reliable quality to the trade buyer is discovered.

“Brand is very important, but one which we have had great difficulty in developing in a way we would like. ... the resources required to do that would be enormous.”

(H1, EM1¹⁵)

“Packhouses and/or growers use their own brand. Buyers know who the good ones are... so it is important that we are associating our brand with good sub-brands that are well-known.”

(H1, EM2)

“Certainly [the brand] is important in the distribution phase. It is certainly not important in retail. ... We focus on building our brand around the ... produce distribution sector.”

(H1, EM3)

“I would like to think that brands play an important role. ... I feel that our ... brand is well-known at wholesale level in a lot of places around the world. I certainly would not pretend that it is known at the consumer level ... but it is respected at wholesale level.”

(H2, EM1)

“Brands play an important role, but really only to the trade. I do not envisage where ... our brand will get through to the consumer, it is just too difficult.”

(H2, EM2)

“Brands are important, they are hugely important. We do not brand as well as we should do. But the perception of the brand is of [high] quality ... it is asked for and they are prepared to pay a premium. Branding is everything ... it is why people come to us.”

(H3)

¹⁵ The abbreviation EM (export manager) has been used for directors, export managers and product managers responsible for exports, to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

“Certain customers are obsessed with certain brands [based on] the quality of the fruit associated with those brands. It is what is in the box that is important.” (H4)

Brands are important in the produce distribution trade, but exporters do not expect the final consumer to be aware of their export brands.

7.3 Importers’ Perceptions Of Export Brands:

Due to the large number of importers involved in the study extracts from a representative selection of the interviews are provided.

7.3.1 Outdoor Apparel:

In contrast to the strong emphasis on branding by the apparel exporters, analysis revealed only mixed support on the importer side of the dyads. Only three of the 13 importers placed high importance on brands and these were importers who specialised in branded products. Among the remaining importers, the importance attached to exported brands was much lower than that of the exporters:

“They [brands] play some role, but not an important role. ... New Zealand doesn’t have a lot of internationally recognisable brand names, so it’s not a meaningful factor.” (AC3)

“Brands are not that important for new products ... unknown brands should not be expensive or you cannot enter the market very easily. If the brand is a ‘big name’, for example Levis, it has value.” (AC8)

“From years of experience in the rag trade, brand names can be alright for a while and then go off the boil. They are not the money makers that you think they are.” (AC10)

“Brands have got a big asset ... and a big liability attached to them. Generally the liability attached to brand names is that the margin is rarely adequate. ... The exporter brand is not well enough known to discount. It is selling on the strength of its quality rather than necessarily the brand name.” (AC15)

7.3.2 Horticulture:

Of the 20 horticulture importers interviewed, 13 perceived brands to be of high importance. There was thus a greater level of agreement on the importance of branding in horticulture than was the case for outdoor apparel importers.

Produce brands are of low importance when the importer is unable to regard the brand as a guarantee of consistent quality. Even where importers attached high importance to a produce brand, they tend to do so on the basis that a brand ensures a consistent quality standard:

“[Brands are] very important in the trade. ... New Zealand is very good at producing homogenous products, therefore the reality is that the only thing I’ve got to sell is the brand ...” (HC5)

“..if it isn’t a brand ... it’s only ability to sell comes down to price. ... The brand does count but if you can get consistent quality in a carton then it makes it even stronger.” (HC6)

“I think [the brand] is important but I think the actual product is the most important part ... I do think the product has to be good before you brand it ... if it is a good product then obviously the brand will be very strong.” (HC11)

“Brands are becoming more important. I believe that everyone should have a brand. We’re getting customers coming back and asking for a particular brand. That’s becoming more common.” (HC13)

The importers who attach least importance to produce brands are those who simply do not accept the brand as a reliable indicator of quality:

"I'm a firm believer that they're not as important as brand marketers would say. At the consumer level all the research shows that brands are not worth the investment. ... I think the risk versus the reward in brand marketing are way on the negative side ..." (HC2)

"The role of brands is a difficult one. ... There are many brands on the market today that are quite meaningless. ... There are only a few brands that are respected by the customer. We tend to look at branding as a confusing message to the consumer" (HC12)

"For buying, brand doesn't have any value because we only buy product on specification [and] brand will have little to do with that." (HC17)

"Brands are not so important. We do not care about the brand. The content is important. All brands have some inferior quality, even famous brands, therefore [brands] are not so important." (HC19)

7.4 Hypotheses:

While this case study is intended to be exploratory, brand dyad perceptions are structured around five hypotheses as follows:

H1: Apparel exporters will attach greater importance to brands than horticulture exporters.

This first hypothesis simply reflects the different brand intensities of the two industries as discussed above. While both sets of exporters can be expected to attach high importance to brands, the relatively low volume, niche market position of the apparel products will be the more brand intensive of these two product types. The apparel exporter seeks in effect to export the domestic brand in the hope that this will be sufficient to 'position' the product in a range of overseas markets. The brand is seen as the only way to compete. For the horticulture exporters, brand will be regarded as less

critical to overseas sales because the quality of the exported produce will be subject to screening and sample testing.

H2: Apparel importers will attach less importance to New Zealand brands than do horticulture importers of New Zealand produce.

New Zealand branded apparel is relatively unknown in most major international markets. Since these brands have limited value in the overseas market, brand name *per se* is of reduced importance to the apparel importer. However, manufactured apparel can be produced with much greater reliability than a horticulture product. The uncontrollable factors (e.g., weather, infestations, disease) which can afflict horticulture coupled with the greater volumes involved per importer mean that a reliable brand will have value to the importer. Branding here conveys a message about the quality control standard of the exporter and so serves to reduce the importers' uncertainty.

H3: Apparel exporters will attach more importance to brands than the importers of the product.

The basis for this third hypothesis is that New Zealand apparel exporters are overly brand-conscious as a consequence of their experiences in the small and competitive domestic market. They are unable to compete internationally on unit cost and hence price. The importers will have other products in their portfolio including own brand garments. While they may attach some value to a branded export product, the value to them will be determined in the main by a combination of quality, price and country of origin effects. The actual brand *per se* will be of less importance to the importer than to the exporter.

H4: Horticulture exporters attach less importance to brands than the importers of the produce.

The chain of supply from grower through packhouse and shipper may be different from season to season. This variability may be regarded as normal business for the exporter but, in the absence of the brand, such changes could create uncertainty for the importer. Hence the particular value of the brand to the foreign buyer.

H5: Importer satisfaction with a brand will be determined in part by differences in the importance of branding to each member of the dyad.

If an exporter attaches much more importance to their brand than the importer, then we would expect this dyad relationship to be somewhat unsatisfactory, particularly for the importer. Price premia associated with the brand will be more difficult to achieve as will the level of brand support and promotion in the foreign market. Conversely when the importer attaches the greater importance to a brand, then we would expect this to be reflected in a high level of importer satisfaction with a relationship which may be supplying brand-quality product at below premium prices.

7.5 Empirical Evidence:

A six-point Likert scale (6 = High Importance, 1 = No Importance) was used in each interview to gauge the following:

- (a) the importer's satisfaction with the exporter's brand (IM-SAT)
- (b) the importance of branding to the importer (IMBR)
- (c) the exporter's assessment of the importer's level of satisfaction with brand (EX-SAT)
- (d) the exporter's assessment of the importance of branding to the importer (EXBR).

Note then that (c) and (d) are exporter assessments of (a) and (b) respectively. This is an important feature of the study since it enables us to investigate both the actual satisfaction of the importer and the extent of understanding across the individual dyads.

Before proceeding to test the hypotheses, it is useful to consider the correlation matrix of these four variables in Table 7.1. This table also includes a fifth variable reflecting the product type (apparel = 0; horticulture = 1) which is labelled PROD.

There are two results among the correlation coefficients reported in Table 1 that point to the absence of expected linkages. The first of these is the lack of association ($r = 0.10$) between the importers' level of satisfaction with their dyad partner's brand (IM-SAT) and the New Zealand firms assessment of their importer's satisfaction with the brand (EX-SAT). The second is the even weaker association ($r = 0.08$) between the actual importance of branding to the importer (IMBR) and the exporter's assessment of how

important brands are to the importer (EXBR). This confirms an absence of shared understanding of the importance of brands within the importer-exporter relationship, as was suggested in the interview extracts reported above.

Table 7.1: Correlation Matrix -- Brand Importance and Satisfaction				
Variable	Importer Satisfaction (IM-SAT)	Importer Brand Importance (IMBR)	Exporter Satisfaction (EX-SAT)	Exporter Brand Importance (EXBR)
Importer Satisfaction (IM-SAT)	1.00			
Importer Brand Importance (IMBR)	0.39**	1.00		
Exporter Satisfaction (EX-SAT)	0.10	0.34*	1.00	
Exporter Brand Importance (EXBR)	- 0.17	0.08	0.37**	1.00
Industry (PROD)	0.27	0.06	- 0.06	-0.24
** = p < 0.05 * = p < 0.10				

The highly significant coefficients (0.39 and 0.37) suggest that the strongest dyads would be those in which both importer and exporter attach high importance to brands. However, as already noted, the chances of this occurring are not high (see above, $r = 0.08$).

Finally by way of interpretation, the larger coefficients in the final row of Table 1 suggest that horticulture importers are more satisfied than those dealing in apparel ($r = 0.27$) and that apparel exporters expect more of their brands than do horticultural exporters ($r = -0.24$). However, neither of these particular coefficients is significant in this data set.

Returning to the five hypotheses introduced in the previous section, these can now be tested using the variables defined above. The basic data (means, standard deviations, and sample sizes) are contained in Table 7.2.

The first hypothesis (H1) states that the mean EXBR apparel is greater than the mean EXBR horticulture. The differences between the means ($4.3 - 3.6 = +0.7$) is in the expected direction and is significant at the 10% level.

Table 7.2: Brand Importance and Satisfaction of Dyad Members					
Product	Data	(IM-SAT)	(IMBR)	(EX-SAT)	(EXBR)
Horticulture	Mean	4.5	4.5	4.1	3.6
	Standard Deviation	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2
	Sample Size	20	20	21	22
Apparel	Mean	3.7	4.6	3.9	4.3
	Standard Deviation	1.8	1.1	1.7	1.6
	Sample Size	9	11	12	14

For hypotheses two to four the differences are in the expected directions but none are statistically significant (H2: 3.9 - 4.1 = -0.2; H3: 4.3 - 3.9 = +0.4; H4: 3.6 - 4.1 = -0.5) in these cases.

The final hypothesis (H5) states that the level of importer satisfaction within a dyad will be determined in part by differences in the importance each party attaches to brands. The key dependent variable here is the ratio of IM-SAT, the direct measure of the importers' satisfaction with the brand, to EX-SAT, the exporters' assessment of the importers' satisfaction level. This final hypothesis is tested using a simple linear regression as follows:

$$\text{IM-SAT/EX-SAT} = f(\text{IMBR/EXBR})$$

The model seeks to explain IM-SAT relative to EX-SAT in terms of EXBR and IMBR. Essentially this model is trying to reveal the extent to which satisfaction with brands is shared across the dyads. Extreme values of the dependent variable in this model represent somewhat fragile dyads, those in which the exporter and importer express very different levels of satisfaction with the brand involved. The estimated equation is as follows:

$$\begin{array}{lcl} \text{IM-SAT/EX-SAT} & = & 0.53 + 0.45 (\text{IMBR/EXBR}) \\ \text{(t-values)} & & (2.07) \quad (2.14) \end{array}$$

$$R^2 = 16.0\%; F = 4.56 (1, 24); p=0.04$$

The regression confirms that around 16% of the variation of the dependent variable can be explained by a lack of shared understanding on the importance attached to brands across the dyad. Where the same importance is attached, then the independent variable equals one and the predicted value of the dependent variable is also close to unity (ie., $0.53 + 0.45 = 0.98$). Importers are more satisfied than the exporters think when they are able to attach more importance to the brand than the exporters believe. The converse also applies: importers are much less satisfied with the brand (than the exporter thinks) when the exporter expects much more emphasis on their brand than the importer is able to provide. Both equations (apparel, horticulture) were re-estimated with the dummy independent variable (PROD) entered but in neither case was this significant.

7.6 Summary:

Many exporters appear to have an inadequate understanding of their customer's perception of the importance of the export brand. The interview transcripts and data reveal that the horticultural exporters tend to undervalue the importance of their brands. The value of the brand to the importer reflects the perception that "Branding usually implies consistent quality ...[and] enables customers to reduce the perceived risk in the purchase decision process" (Kinnear, Bernhardt & Krentler, 1995, p. 294) and the brand as "... a seller's promise to consistently deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services to the buyer" (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994, p. 285).

"The horticulture market brand is what you build by repetitious news releases and quality. You build brands by consistent quality and the (delivery) system. Then the brand becomes an issue. The brands can actually save your downturn ... but you can't build a brand after advertising unless you follow it up with quality." (H5)

"If that brand represents quality, consistent supply, then there is going to be a priority on that brand. ... (the retail buyer knows) the quality rate is going to be consistent, the rejection rate is going to be low to zero and it's just not going to be a problem." (HC7)

"Impact of brands is about 5 ~ 10 % increase for fresh fruit. Brand is only important at the trade level." (HC22)

Combining the ratings evidence with the verbatim extracts from the horticultural importers we can surmise that it is not the brand per se but the brand as the seller's representation as to the quality of the produce which is important to the importer. This is neither well understood nor used by most produce exporters.

For apparel exporters their brand is seen as an important component of the product in their domestic market. It comes to encapsulate image and positioning and becomes inseparable from the product itself. The brand then becomes a crucial point of differentiation for the exporter. Apparel importers buy New Zealand-made apparel based on its perceived value and marketability due to its origin in an unusual, even exotic, country. The perceived value is based then on inherent value for money. Brands are of limited importance as they have no local image to draw upon.

These diverging perceptions of the role of brands in exporting may help explain the lack of correlation between the importers' and exporters' perceptions of brands. At the very least the results indicate a need for exporters to gain a better understanding of their customers' perspective on the role of the export brand and then incorporate these into the international marketing strategy. Understanding the customer perspective becomes crucial due to variations in perceptions of the role of brands:

"... personally I'm not a believer in produce and branding. ... For branding, I believe you have to be 12 months out of the year and if you are (then) you have to be very quality conscious because ... you have to go to other countries and other suppliers ... you have to be really committed to make it work. ... In produce there are very few brands. ... We rely more on exporters ... we rely on those people to get us the product necessary." (HC1)

This lack of general consensus also appeared within export companies, where multiple export managers were interviewed:

For H1, two interviewees perceived the export brands as strong and being associated with quality. The other interviewee recognised the importance of a brand, but indicated that they were having great difficulty in developing the brand in a way which they would like.

For H2, one of the three interviewees does not promote the brand, preferring to use a theme which is appropriate for the specific horticulture product. This approach is a combination of promotion and education.

Overall, brands do assist some exporters to move their produce through the overseas distribution channel. For exporters in both the outdoor apparel and horticulture industries, the presence of a brand will not have a negative effect on product perceptions and they may assist in differentiating the product. Placing their brand on quality produce will expose the exporter's brand to the wholesale trade and may build a positive association over time. Therefore it becomes a question of the degree of emphasis placed on the brand, within the overseas distribution channel, rather than whether to brand or not.

In summary, this research has revealed a marked lack of understanding on the importance being attached to export brands once the product is with the importer. Apparel exporters appear to attach rather more importance to their brands than do the importers of the product while, on the other hand, horticulture exporters seem to attach too little importance to their brand. There is clearly scope for greater mutual understanding on the role of brands and the onus lies with the exporters to become more customer-oriented and learn more about the perceptions and feelings of their overseas buyers.

Chapter 8: Summary & Implications

Chapter Outline

8.1 Summary of Research Findings

8.1.1 The Role of Vendor-Related Factors in Search and Selection

8.1.2 The Influence of Product-Related Factors on Relationships

8.1.3 The Continuity of Factors in all Relationship States

8.1.4 The Lack of Understanding Between Exporters and Importers

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8.3 Implications for Advisory Agencies

Chapter 8: Summary & Implications

This research focuses on a dyadic perspective of the international business relationship, commencing with relationship initiation through relationship development to a quality relationship. The scope of the research is broad and the findings numerous, however, four main themes have emerged from the analysis:

- the role of vendor-related factors in partner search and selection;
- the influence of product-related factors on relationships;
- the changing influence of relationship factors; and,
- the lack of understanding between exporters and importers.

8.1 Summary of Research Findings:

8.1.1: The Role of Vendor-Related Factors in Search and Selection:

The process of selecting suppliers has traditionally been viewed as a transaction-based bidding process driven by bid-related factors (product quality, price). This research confirms the importance and central role of vendor-related factors (mutual trust and knowledge, dependable delivery, responsiveness to problems) in the search process.

Bid-related factors can be objectively assessed by importers based on samples and trial shipments. Vendor-related factors are more subjective and longer term, making their assessment difficult in the early period of the relationship. Thus, the prominence of the importers' preference for third-party referrals as a source of new international suppliers, providing an independent confirmation of vendor-related factors and allowing reduced risk while using a satisficing approach to vendor selection.

The exporter can actively influence the relationship initiation process by understanding importer and industry differences in the search process. The horticulture industry utilises referrals, supplier-initiated contacts, and advisory groups to identify new suppliers. Outdoor apparel importers utilise referrals, trade shows and visits. Japanese importers are the primary users of advisory groups, making these an important third-

party resource for entering that market. Australian and American importers prefer 'gentleperson's agreements' whereas Japanese importers tend towards formal or 'spot' agreements, perhaps to clarify and avoid language difficulties.

Vendor-related factors reported to be important during the search and selection process include 'mutual trust and knowledge', 'responsiveness to problems', 'dependable for long-term supply' and 'stable management'. The influence of vendor related factors is consistent with the findings of Styles and Ambler (1994), although the specific factors investigated varied. The confirmation of the importance of these vendor-related factors indicates a requirement for further research into the relative importance of various influences, including third-party referrals, bid-related and vendor-related factors to the relationship initiation process.

8.1.2: The Influence of Product-Related Factors on Relationships:

These case studies revealed that product-related factors, particularly product quality, product sales volume and appropriate price, are influential in the relationship development process. This finding is supported by the requirement for a product relationship as the first step in relationship development for the majority of importers. Further confirmation is provided by the prominence of bid-related factors (product quality, marketable product, price) in the importers' perspective of the process to developing quality relationships.

Product quality has a primary role in supplier selection which has been confirmed by numerous studies. However the continued role of product quality through relationship development and creating quality relationships has not been recognised in the extant literature. Product quality and product sales volume both rank in the 'top 5' relationship development factors and product quality remains the second most important factor in quality relationships.

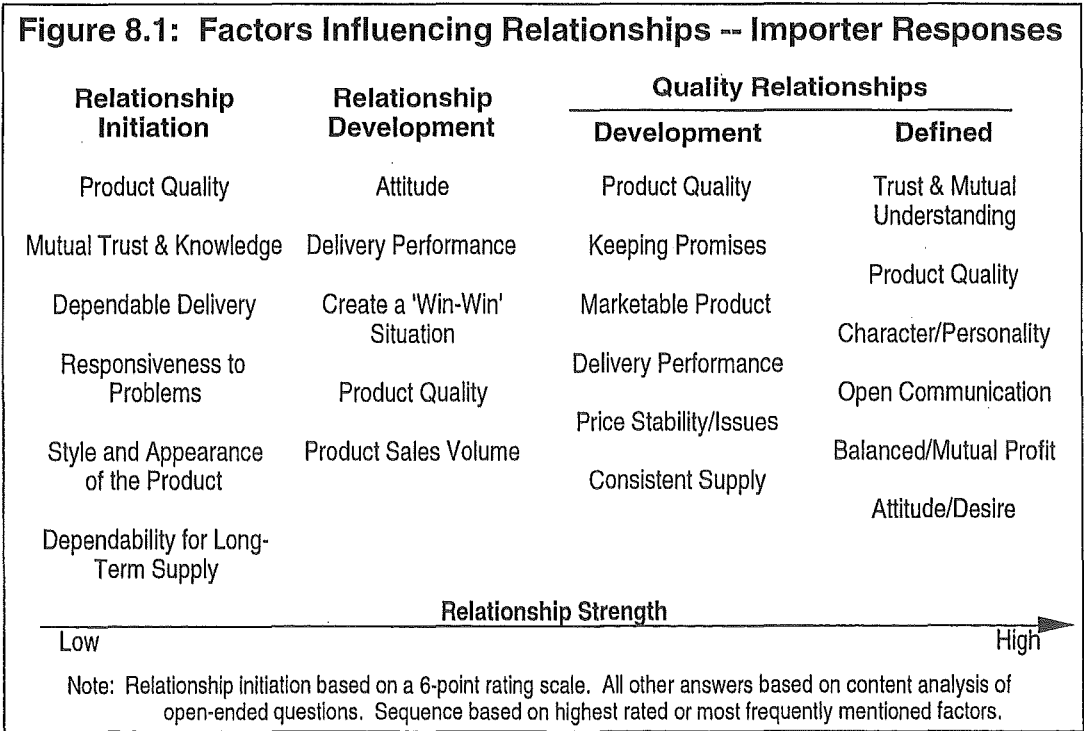
The prominence of product-related factors in response to factors influencing relationship development and as a component of quality relationships must be recognised in future relationship marketing models. Including these product-related factors automatically raises questions regarding relationship marketing as a 'paradigm shift' and propositions that "marketing mix management with its 4P's is reaching the

end of the road as a universal marketing approach.” (Grönroos, 1994, p. 22). These case studies clearly reveal a role for product performance, exporter performance and intercompany interactions in the formation and development of relationships and indicate a need to merge the marketing mix and relationship marketing theories to create a more comprehensive picture of international marketing.

The emergence of the influence of product-related factors on relationships is the result of capturing unprompted responses from dyad participants, confirming the importance of qualitative research methods during model development. The semi-structured case study approach utilised in this research allowed the capture of these new dimensions of relationships, modifying and adding to existing export and relationship theory.

8.1.3: The Changing Influence of Relationship Factors:

The importance of factors influencing exporter-importer relationship changes as the relationship strengthens. This indicates a need to be aware of the state of the relationship to understand which factors should be emphasised to continue strengthening that relationship. The changing nature of the factors reported as important in these case studies are summarised in Figure 8.1.



‘Product quality’ is the only factor to appear in all four relationship levels, emphasising the product dimension of relationships. ‘Dependable delivery’ or ‘delivery performance’ appears in the first three columns, but is no longer a concern when a quality relationship is achieved. All levels of relationship include a mix of product, exporter and interaction factors. Product and exporter factors are prominent at relationship initiation, with interaction factors being more prominent in a quality relationship. The consistency of all three groups of factors across multiple levels of relationship indicates that these levels may be a continuous process from relationship initiation, through relationship development, and finally in a few cases, developing into a quality relationship. The empirical linkage of these concepts, as proposed in Figure 6.1, is new to the published literature.

The above summary (Figure 8.1) indicates a process where specific factors are active or latent at various times during a relationship. Thus, the relationship strength measure is proposed as an approach to assessing the status of the relationship, thereby providing guidance to which factors may be applicable to that relationship, at that time.

8.1.4: The Lack of Understanding Between Exporters and Importers:

Comparing both exporter and importer perspectives of the changing influence of decision variables (Table 8.1) reveals a mismatch of perceptions throughout the process, a theme which has emerged in all phases of this research.

The exporter does not have an accurate understanding of which supplier selection criteria are important to the importer. Five of the ‘top 10’ selection criteria revealed significant differences in responses on the importance of the selection criteria.

Table 8.1: Comparison of 'Top 5' Dyad Relationship Factors									
IMPORTER RATING				FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPORTER DECISION PROCESSES	EXPORTER PERCEPTION				
SELECTION CRITERIA		Relationship Development	Relationship Quality		SELECTION CRITERIA		Relationship Development	Relationship Quality	
Importance	Satisfaction				Importance	Satisfaction			
1 =	2	4 =	2	Product Quality	1	8	6 =	6	
1 =	1	-	1	Mutual Trust & Knowledge	5 *	1	-	1	
1 =	-	2 =	-	Dependable delivery	2	-	2 =	-	
4	-		-	Responsiveness	7	-	2 =	-	
5 =		-	-	Style & Appearance of Product	9 *	4	-	-	
5 =	3	-	-	Dependable for Long-Term Supply	11 *	5	-	-	
		1	5 =	Attitude / Desire			-	-	
		2 =	-	Create a Win-Win-Situation			-	-	
		4 =	-	Product Sales Volume			-	-	
			4	Communications			2 =	2	
			3	Character / Personality				-	
			5 =	Balanced / Mutual Profit				4 =	
* = Significant Difference (p < 0.05)									

This misunderstanding is most striking in low performing dyads where there is a low level of importer satisfaction for 5 of the 'top 10' selection criteria (dependable delivery, price competitiveness, responsiveness to problems, stable management, and after sales service). The differences between low and high performing dyads were also manifest as:

- high performing dyad importers being more satisfied on all selection criteria except price competitiveness;
- low performing dyad exporters are more price sensitive, rating importer satisfaction much lower on this measure even though there were no differences between high and low dyad importer satisfaction with price; and,
- for the five distinguishing satisfaction measures, high performing dyad ratings were closer than low performing dyads, with the exporter over optimistic in their assessment of importer satisfaction in low performing dyads.

The lack of consensus is very clear in factors influencing relationship development. Only one of the importers' five most frequently mentioned items (dependable delivery) appears in the exporters' 'top 5' list. The importers' most frequently mentioned factor, attitude, received only one exporter mention. The exporters' most frequently mentioned factor, personalisation (67%), was mentioned by only 8% of importers. For importers, developing personal bonds (personalisation) is one aspect of a quality relationship, a stronger relationship achieved by only a few suppliers. Thus the exporters are using the wrong relationship tactic for the current relationship.

The exporter-importer perception mismatch continues in perceptions of what constitutes relationship quality and how it is developed. Both dyad partners agree on the importance of 'trust and mutual understanding' to relationship quality, however their views diverge beyond this point. These differences are even more striking in perceptions of how to create relationship quality. Importers require a mix of product performance, exporter performance and intercompany interactions, whereas exporters emphasise personal aspects (visits, honesty, communications, personalisation).

Analysis revealed significant differences in four of the relationship strength measures: trust in the fairness of the dyad partner; dyad partner notification of changes; seeking a partner-like relationship; and, ability to anticipate the intentions of the dyad partner. Although 'open communication' was assessed highly by both dyad partners, communication is required to overcome the mismatches in three of these relationship strength measures. The fourth, trust in fairness of dyad partner, requires open communication plus trust building activities by the importer to raise the exporters' 'fairness' perception level.

The final aspect of mismatched dyad perceptions is in the role of brands in international business exchange. Outdoor apparel exporters rely on brands to differentiate their product and enhance the product image, however there is no correlation to the importers' lower perception of these brands, which have limited image or recognition in the destination market. Horticulture exporters perceive a limited role for brands and use them for identification purposes. Horticulture importers perceive the brand as the exporters' commitment to consistently deliver quality products and they can obtain premiums for certain brands. Both exporter and importer agree that brands are only applicable in the distribution channel and not at the consumer level.

8.1.5: Other Findings:

This research provided other findings which are relevant for exporter-importer dyads, but do not fit within the four major themes which emerged.

There is an internal consistency and linkage between respondent answers which remains even when dyad partners' perceptions differ. For example, the importer's higher ranked selection criteria and satisfaction are positively and significantly correlated to their relationship strength measure, revealing a 'flow-on' effect of changes in perceptions of one item to other importer perceptions. This implies that a focused strategy by an exporter to improve the importers' perception in one area will have multiple benefits.

Analysis revealed an age/life cycle effect in the dyad sales growth, with highest performing dyads founded on personal familiarity, integrity and respect. Low performing dyads display a lack of closeness and communication problems.

The case study data presented in this research does not support a stages model of relationship development. While respondents had no difficulty in classifying their relationship according to a simple stages model, analysis of objective and subjective data revealed no consistency within and across dyad responses, providing no support for the relationship stages concept. This raises concerns about responses to predetermined theoretical research questions included as prompts for respondents.

Analysis revealed that the factors which are important to relationship development could be classified into four groups which were incorporated into the new relationship development model proposed in this document (Figure 5.3). Further empirical research is required to test the robustness of this enhanced model.

Analysis of the relationship development process revealed multiple paths to creating a relationship. The majority of importers require a product-based relationship prior to moving to an organisational or personal relationship with their dyad partner. However there are sufficient importer variations that it is important for the exporter to understand the relational expectations of the specific importer and adapt their approach based on their customer's requirements.

Trust is shown to be central to ongoing relationships, but has limited influence in the relationship development process. I conclude that trust is developed in parallel to the relationship and may act as a trigger for moving from relationship development to relationship maintenance -- that is, trust assumes a central role in the relationship and some other relationship development factors reduce in importance or become latent.

In summary, the dyadic approach used in this research has provided a rich resource of data which has revealed new insights into international business relationships. These findings have modified and added to the extant literature for the export and relationship marketing research streams.

8.2 Implications for Exporters:

The results of this study have important implications for exporters. Perhaps the most significant requirement is for exporters to recognise the mismatch between exporter and importer perceptions of the relationship. Without recognition of this mismatch the exporter will not perceive the need to modify their approach and they will maintain the mistaken belief that they already understand what is important to their customer.

In conjunction with this is the need to adapt the findings in this report to the specific circumstances of the dyad relationship, as this research revealed multiple paths to establishing relationships. Without open communication, the exporter may attempt to modify their behaviour or export emphasis in a manner inappropriate to the specific relationship, resulting in detrimental effects to that relationship. Thus, for all export relationships an open discussion of importer expectations and their current assessment of the dyad relationship will provide valuable information to the exporter. Most importers participating in this study appear very willing to share this information.

Exporters should not be misled by the current popularity of the 'relational' emphasis in the relationship marketing literature. This research clearly shows that product, exporter and intercompany interaction dimensions of the relationship are important from the initial search through to establishing quality relationships. Exporters tend to emphasise relational aspects throughout the relationship process, whereas the importers remain focused on product and vendor-related factors in addition to the intercompany

interactions. It is only for a few quality relationships that personal bonding becomes important to the importer.

The prominent role of vendor-related factors in the search and selection of business partners should influence how exporters approach their new business development activities. Referred trust, through third-party 'brokers', provides credibility for the exporter and an initial opportunity to overcome the importer's difficulty in assessing subjective search and selection criteria. Therefore, exporters can utilise their business networks to create new business opportunities and then adapt their approach based on the individual importer requirements.

The variation in the importance of specific factors during the strengthening of the relationship reemphasises the value to the exporter in gaining an understanding of the importers' perspective of the strength of the relationship and their current concerns regarding under-performance against expectations.

The role of brands is another area of misunderstanding which requires realignment. For outdoor apparel exporters the strength of the brand in the domestic market is an indication of the brand's potential in overseas markets, however, it is rare for a New Zealand brand to have any recognition overseas (with the possible exception of Australia). For the importer there is no local brand recognition and they must promote the product based on a country image or a brand in association with a country. It will take resources and time to establish 'new' brands in the three established markets included within this study and the level of brand promotion becomes an important discussion point for the exporter and importer. They must determine how much money to invest in brand promotion, the probability that there will be a 'payback' on that investment, and the 'best' use of those funds. These decisions will vary across and within destination markets.

For horticulture exporters the brand implies consistent quality and provides a basis for importer risk reduction when they perceive the brand as a promise to deliver consistent quality. Thus, branding horticulture exports for the distribution channel can contribute to the export relationship as it is a component of the export commitment and visual evidence of the exporters' quality control process. The presence of a brand will not have negative effects on product perceptions, but over time may lead to a positive association which can attract attention or command a small premium.

In summary, exporters must recognise current relationship perception mismatches and initiate action to overcome those present within their export relationships. Action in this area may allow the exporter to 'stand out' from competitors and through this differentiation build stronger export relationships.

8.3 Implications for Advisory Agencies:

The complexity of the search process and the number of potential important variables to be considered by dyad partners leads to a satisficing approach to dyad creation. The dyad formation approach employed most frequently is third-party referrals. Thus, export advisory agencies are important referral agents and they can facilitate export opportunities by encouraging exporters to recommend other local exporters when their product range does not encompass all the importer's requirements. These informal networks are important information exchanges and there is potential to increase the information flow by proactively promoting the availability of information at overseas contact points, for example, TRADENZ offices in overseas markets and New Zealand embassies.

Export advisory agencies should develop their own understanding of the relationship initiation and development process and the factors which influence the strengthening of relationships. These agencies will then be able to advise and educate potential and existing exporters as they move to build their international sales. Intuitively, many entrepreneurs are aware of some of the important relationship factors. However, this research has clearly shown the perception mismatches and a need to realign the exporters' focus. Export advisory agencies have an important role in the proclamation of the need to openly communicate with international business partners as part of the relationship building process.

Product quality is important to the export relationship at all levels. The cost structure in New Zealand precludes a 'low price' export marketing approach and the emphasis has been on quality for exports. While this quality focus is complementary to relationship development, quality is becoming a minimum standard to enter some export markets and it no longer differentiates the exporter. Two areas associated with quality were mentioned by importers:

- Importers require consistent quality. It is the consistency, that is the predicability of the quality, that is important.
- Quality takes precedence over price in relationship development with price mostly having negative connotations.

The need for price stability and appropriate pricing were commented upon and the resolution of pricing issues influences developing quality relationships. Expectations of 'premium' prices for New Zealand export products, based on superior product quality, may need to be modified to premium quality and appropriate pricing. Appropriate pricing does not exclude higher prices when the product and market conditions support this approach, however not all quality products can support premium prices in overseas markets. The need for appropriate pricing must become part of the export advisory education process for new exporters, creating realistic expectations for pricing and profitability in export markets.

In summary, export advisory agencies have an important role in introducing and facilitating the introduction of exporters and importers. There is an opportunity for agents to proactively acquire and distribute exporter information to provide these opportunities for local exporters. Export advisers should also provide opportunities for exporters to improve their understanding of export relationship development to enable them to utilise marketing tactics appropriate to the level of their relationship. Finally, the importance of consistent quality coupled with appropriate pricing to strengthen relationships, must be communicated to exporters.

Chapter 9: Future Research & Conclusions

Chapter Outline

9.1 Research Context

9.2 Limitations

9.3 Future Research

9.4 Conclusions

Chapter 9: Future Research & Conclusions

9.1 Research Context:

This research has improved our understanding of exporter-importer relationships through exploring supplier search and selection, relationship development and quality relationships, while identifying areas of misunderstanding within dyadic relationships.

The multi-country, multiple case study, qualitative and quantitative, dyadic approach provided an opportunity to explore current export theory from a different perspective to yield new insight. The approach was well suited to understanding the dynamics of international relationships and yielded a rich resource of material for analysis.

“... building theory from case study research is most appropriate in the early stages of research in a topic or to provide freshness in perspective to an already researched topic.” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 548)

This research has brought a fresh perspective to the established export literature, providing confirmation of supplier selection criteria, challenging relationship development stages models and adding to the ‘body of knowledge’ in the area of supplier search and selection, relationship development, quality relationships, relationship strength and the role of brands. A new model of relationship development is proposed based on the case study data, providing an empirically-based theory for future research.

“Good theory is practical precisely because it advances knowledge in a scientific discipline, guides research towards critical questions, and enlightens the profession of management.” (Van de Ven, 1989, p. 486)

This research showed that the process of searching for international business partners, then developing and maintaining relationships were not autonomous acts driven by separate criteria in discrete, analytical business decisions. Rather, many factors important in the selection of business partners continued to influence perceptions of quality relationships at a later time. A mix of bid- and vendor-related factors were present during the search process and throughout the relationship. The importance of

specific factors varies during the relationship and they become active or latent as the relationship develops over time. The changing influence of relationship factors at different levels of relationships necessitates the measurement of the relationship to determine which factors are active for that relationship. This research utilised relationship strength, a measure of the robustness of the relationship, as this relationship measure. It also revealed some industry and country variations in approach, although these were secondary to the overall findings.

9.2 Limitations:

Methodological rigour has been used throughout this research, particularly in the process of content analysis. However, the author's own experience inevitably influences the understanding and interpretation of the data, therefore case studies are, in part, self-reflective.

"Research progress ultimately depends on the sincerity and good judgement of those who do the research ..." (Starbuck, 1968, p. 161)

This issue was addressed by applying a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Jick, 1981; Romano, 1989) to improve triangulation.

"In the social sciences, triangulation is used for the application of two or more methods on the same research problem in order to increase the reliability of the results." (Gummerson, 1991, p. 121-2)

Interviews included dyad specific and more general exporter-importer relationship questions. As the research participants were in established relationships there is potential for 'past rationalisation' by respondents. This risk was reduced through multiple questions and interviewer flexibility in pursuing additional questions when responses appeared inconsistent. The responses to scaled items were clearly explained for context (dyad or general) prior to each section proceeding and prompt sheets were utilised to facilitate clear understanding.

The number of scaled items in each section was limited to improve cooperation in responses. Limiting the number of items, particularly in the supplier selection criteria

could lead to important items being omitted. However the items were selected based on their proven importance in previous studies and there was space for respondents to add their own items at the bottom of the list if they felt other items were important. The potential for omitting important items was further reduced by open-ended questions on identifying and selecting new international suppliers and a general “any other items” question at the end of the interview.

The existence of the relationship development continuum (from relationship initiation to a quality relationship) was revealed by this research. The concept of relationship strength as a measure of the position of the dyad on the continuum was developed during the analysis of the case study data. In this role, relationship strength, as a continuum measure, provides more scope for quantitative analysis than the existing stages model theory and avoids issues associated with using ordinal data. However, this exploratory case study did not contain sufficient data to link quality relationships to high relationship strength nor differentiate between ‘low’ and ‘high’ strength relationships. This area requires further research using a larger sample.

The exploratory focus of this case study produced effective sample sizes which eventually proved too small for sophisticated quantitative analysis. Therefore, further data should be compiled to conduct a conclusive test of the research findings and, more generally, to evaluate their extension to other consumer and industrial products, and other markets.

This research has focused on New Zealand products and, more specifically, New Zealand exporters and their overseas customers. While I can describe these firms in general terms as niche exporters to international markets through an importer, I cannot claim that these findings are generalisable to exporters from other countries.

The focus of this research was to explore the ‘how’, ‘what’ and ‘why’ of establishing and building exporter-importer relationships within the context of export marketing. While the context, design and size of the study is unusual, it proved fruitful in yielding fresh insight into export relationships. However, the ability to generalise these findings and the proposed model must be confirmed through replication and broader samples prior to final acceptance.

9.3 Future Research:

The process of conceptualising, designing and analysing these case studies revealed a wealth of research opportunities outside the 'traditional' exporter survey based approach which could shed light on our knowledge of export marketing. The current emphasis on large-scale surveys of exporters may enable cost effective research to be conducted and published, however we are in danger of increasingly focusing on trivial gaps in the literature to position research for publication. While we explain decreasing amounts of exporter performance variability, important influences outside the exporting firm remain relatively unexplored.

Exporters do not conduct business in a vacuum. The current export research emphasis does not provide a balanced perspective of the two-way dynamic process inherent in international business. This dyad research has revealed significant differences between exporter and importer perspectives and shows that the exporter has a poor understanding of the importance of importers' decision criteria and relationship expectations. This indicates that the existing exporter-based research may have limited value in understanding the importer perspective of the dyad. The most obvious initial focus for future research is inclusion of the importers' perspective. In association with this is the exporter-importer relationship, the relationship in the wider context of the international distribution network, and factors influencing the initiation, development and decline of exporter-importer relationships. All these topics can be linked back to existing knowledge of the exporting firm and exporter performance.

To facilitate the transition to a broader export research focus I believe that it is necessary for researchers to return to qualitative studies to gain a fresh perspective of the export process, develop revised theoretical models and expand existing measurement scales, prior to returning to large-scale quantitative analysis. This case study research revealed that an important influence on relationship development, that is product quality, was omitted from current relationship models and it also provided additional variables which were not included in the existing literature. This is where qualitative research can complement the more common quantitative export research.

Understanding the importers' decision making process and factors influencing those decisions is valuable as this enables the exporter to modify marketing tactics to meet the identified requirements of the importer. Improving the exporters' knowledge of the importers' expectations may result in improved customer service and more satisfied

importers, creating stronger bonds and building barriers to entry by competing firms. These factors require further research.

The 'focal dyad' relationship exists in the context of a larger relational network which is utilised to provide 'third party' referrals to minimise the effort and risk associated with the search process. Research of the relational networks, combined with relationship marketing theory and an exporter-importer perspective may shed additional light on the referral process, the dynamics of supplier search and selection and the relationship building process.

Research in the area of relationship initiation and development, within the marketing context, is in its infancy. The theoretical stages models are not supported by this case research and an alternate case-based relationship development model has been proposed to explain the complexity of this process. This model requires further testing.

Understanding the continuity of influence of certain relationship factors and the active/inactive nature of others is an important future research area. Research into relationship development has, to date, been overshadowed in the rush to understand established relationships. However, I believe that ongoing relationships should be positioned in the context of the overall relationship development process, to ensure that ongoing relationship factors are not inappropriately generalised to all relationships. Thus, the relationship development process has an important role in the context of existing relationship research and these should be linked in future research.

Relationship strength as a measure of the robustness of the relationship and as an approach to positioning dyads on a relationship continuum requires further research. This approach offers valuable insight into the current status of the relationship and the factors currently active within that relationship. Two key areas of research are urgently required: first, establishing a general standard for measuring relationship strength, which is appropriate across different industries and cultures; and second, directly linking relationship strength scores to the relationship continuum to provide a more accurate indication of the state of the relationship and the appropriate relationship tactics. This research is in its formative stage with few empirical articles published. It has long-term potential as a valuable research stream.

The concept of a quality relationship as a 'special case' of high relationship strength and a continuation of relationship development beyond the 'normal' relationship

maintenance level opens many research opportunities. We need to empirically verify that quality relationships are more robust under pressure and short-term non-performance by the exporter (supplier) or importer (customer). We need to identify which factors are critical to a quality relationship across industries and cultures, and which are contingent on the context of that relationship. Other questions include:

- What factors trigger the deterioration of a quality relationship to return it to a normal relationship?
- Can a relationship that has deteriorated be re-established as a quality relationship and what are the implications for performance in this situation?
- How does relationship quality relate to customer retention?

These are intriguing questions which could reveal valuable insight for prospective and existing exporters.

This research included open-ended questions and a scale item for both the exporters' and importers' perspectives of the importance of brands and the importers' satisfaction with the exporters' brand. This approach is unusual and offers the potential to provide a fresh perspective of an area which has been extensively researched. The finding that there are mismatches in the perception of the role of brands within dyads opens a number of new research areas including: the cause of brand perception mismatches; approaches to eliminate brand perception differences; effectively communicating brand image to customers unfamiliar with the brand; the role of brands within distribution channels; defining the role of brands in the exporter-importer context for different products and cultures; and, to provide guidance on low investment approaches to building brand equity in an international context.

9.4 Conclusions:

This research has made several valuable contributions to our understanding of exporter-importer relationships, as evidenced by the publication and acceptance of the two articles already drafted from this study.

The chapter on international supplier search and selection provided a dyadic perspective of the selection process, providing evidence of a lack of understanding between dyad partners, independent of the length of the relationship. It reported the critical role of third-party referrals to an effective search process. Analysis also revealed a cyclical aspect to dyad performance which should be taken into account in future research on exporter-importer performance. The importance of vendor-related factors during search and selection was confirmed in a dyadic context by this study.

The theory of relationship stages was empirically tested and it was found that the case data did not support this concept. Although stages theory has been used in empirical research, the stages theory itself has not been tested previously. An alternate approach to relationship development based on case study evidence has been proposed in this study. This model now requires further testing through quantitative analysis utilising a larger data base.

The primary role of the product was identified in the relationship development model and confirmed by analysis of separate questions regarding product, organisational and personal relationship sequencing. The majority of exporter-importer dyads were initiated by product-based relationships, prior to transitioning to other relational forms. Current relationship development literature has omitted the important role of the product in this context.

The concept of a quality relationship as a special category of robust relationships is important to improving exporters' understanding of the potential for relationships. Overall, few relationships will achieve this level of relationship strength, however an understanding of what constitutes a quality relationship and their threshold requirements will provide guidance in deciding which export relationships warrant the extra resources to achieve this relationship level. An empirical understanding of these relationships has been developed for the first time in this study.

The primary role of the product in all aspects of relationship initiation, development and a quality relationship has been empirically revealed by this research. Inclusion of product-related factors in the relationship marketing literature will challenge existing relationship marketing theories and should initiate revisions to existing research designs.

Relationship strength has been proposed as a measure of the status of the relationship. An initial relationship strength measure is included in this exploratory research, however it is acknowledged that this eleven-item scale needs expansion and refining prior to its adoption for general use. The contribution of this research is in revealing the relationship development continuum and proposing relationship strength as the measure of the relationship's position of that continuum, not in finalising the measure itself.

Finally, the approach to the role of brands in exporter-importer relationships used in this study is new to the literature. Analysis revealed a mismatch in the understanding of what brands mean. Horticulture importers perceive brands as a promise or commitment to consistent quality and only utilise brands in the trade. Outdoor apparel importers utilise brands in conjunction with country-image to differentiate the product and create sufficient interest to initiate further purchase inquiries. These brand roles are different to those currently reported in the brand literature and may represent unknown or weak brand strategies in international markets.

In addressing the research questions proposed at the commencement of this study many more research questions have been raised. These questions warrant further investigation and will lead to many years of productive research. This is the nature of scientific enquiry. Although questions remain, they do not detract from the valuable contribution of this research as it answered the proposed questions and identified additional gaps in the extant literature. There remains large, relatively unexplored research areas in both the export and relationship marketing disciplines. By combining these disciplines we may go part way to resolving the seller-based approach of current export research which appears to go against the spirit of marketing philosophy. Our challenge now is to address the additional research gaps raised by this study.

Appendices

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Appendix 1a: Export Research Methods

		Research Focus			Research Method			Dependent Variables											
Authors	Year	Exporter	Importer	Unmatched Exp. & Imp.	Dyadic	Mail / Phone Survey	Personal Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	Export Sales	Export Sales Growth	Export Intensity	Change in Export Intensity	# of Export Markets	Export Profit/Profitability	Export Profit Intensity	Market Share	Other	Other Variables or Comments
Abdel-Malek	1978	*					*												• Export Orientation
Akooie & Scott	1996	*							*										• Return on Assets; Return on Equity; Return on Sales
Aksoy & Kaynak	1994	*						*											• Case Study
All & Masters	1988	*				*													• Ranking of Skill & Ability Statements
All & Sim	1996	*				*													• Joint venture Stability, 9-Item Success Scale
All & Swiercz	1991	*				*													• Attitude to Exporting
Amine & Cavusgil	1988	*				*					*								
Anderson & Coughlan	1987	*					*												• Market Entry Approach
Angelmar & Pras	1984	*					*		*										• US Distributor purchase of French Film distribution rights.
Axinn	1988	*					*				*								
Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach	1995	*				*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Export Profit Growth (Note: Longitudinal Study - 3 years)
Axinn, Sinkula & Thach	1994	*				*													• Marketing Tactics
Ayal	1982	*							*			*	*						• Six-Item, Industry level composite measure (see page 56 of article)
Ayal & Hirsch	1982	*							*										• Annual \$ Exports/Employee; Annual \$ exports/\$ capital invested
Barrett & Wilkinson	1985	*					*												• Cluster Analysis
Bauerschmidt, Sullivan & Gillespie	1985	*				*													• Factor Analysis
Beamish & Munro	1987	*				*					*			*	*				
Beamish, Craig & McLellan	1993	*				*					*								
Bello & Barksdale	1986	*				*													• Communication Difficulty; Transaction Difficulty
Bello & Gilliland	1987	*				*													• 7-Item scale (strategic, selling & economic measures)
Bello & Lohila	1995	*				*													• Agent vs Distributor Channel
Bello & Williamson	1985	*				*													• Factor Analysis
Bijmolt & Zwart	1994	*				*					*		*	*	*	*	*		• Development; Satisfaction
Bilky	1982	*				*										*			
Bilky	1985	*				*										*			
Bilky	1987	*				*													• Comparative Summaries
Bilky & Tesar	1977	*				*													• Export Stage
Bodur	1994	*				*		*			*								Note: Used to classify firms into three export levels
Bonaccorsi	1992	*				*		*			*								
Brady & Bearden	1979	*				*		*											• Export Method (Direct / Indirect)
Brash	1978	*				*		*											• Tabulations Only
Brooks & Rosson	1982	*				*		*											• Ranking Only
Calof	1994	*						*											• Export Behaviour (Export Propensity; # Countries; Attitudes)
Caughay & Chetty	1994	*					*		*		*								• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
Cavusgil	1982	*				*		*											• Internationalisation Stage
Cavusgil	1985	*					*		*										• Case Study
Cavusgil	1984a	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		Note: Used to differentiate active and passive exporters (Export Activity)
Cavusgil	1984b	*				*		*											• Internationalisation Stage
Cavusgil	1984c	*				*		*			*								Note: Used to determine stage of Internationalization
Cavusgil & Kaynak	1982	*				*		*											• Factor Analysis
Cavusgil & Kirpalani	1993	*						*											• Mat Management's Expectations -- "Long Term Success" (product level analysis)
Cavusgil & Naor	1987	*				*		*											• Exporter versus non-exporter
Cavusgil & Nevin	1981	*				*		*											• Export Market Behaviour (Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy)
Cavusgil & Zou	1994	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Goal Achievement; Perceived Success. Composite (Note: product level analysis)
Cavusgil, Bilky & Tesar	1979	*				*		*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Exporter / Non-Exporter Dichotomy
Chan	1992	*				*		*		*									
Chaney & Goddard	1996	*	*				*												• Rankings & Nonparametric tests
Chetty	1994	*					*		*		*								Note: Used to categorise firms (Success; Below Average; Non-Exporters)
Chetty & Hamilton	1993	*					*		*										• Qualitative -- Pattern Matching
Chiesel & Knight	1981	*	*			*		*											• Nonparametric analysis
Christensen, da Rocha & Gertner	1987	*				*		*											• Continuance to some markets versus cessation of exports - longitudinal study
Cooper & Kleinschmidt	1985	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		Note: Composite performance Indicator
Culpan	1989	*				*		*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Number of export transactions
Cunningham	1980	*	*				*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Case Studies
Cunningham & Spiegel	1971	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• 6 Item (Queens Award criteria)
Czinkota & Johnston	1983	*				*		*											• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
da Rocha, Christensen & da Cunha	1990	*				*		*											• Aggressive and Passive exporters, based on export initiation
Dace	1990	*				*		*											• Case study, supported by survey
Dall	1994	*				*		*		*									• Total Sales; Net Profit - each measured as variations over time
Daniels & Robles	1982	*				*		*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Innovation; Relative Advantage
Das	1994	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Dau & Thirkell	1996	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		• Self-evaluation of performance; customer satisfaction
Dean & Myers	1996	*				*		*			*								• Export Stage
DeLuz	1993	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		Note: Mail survey with interview pilot
Denis & Depelteau	1985	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		Note: Used to categorize exporters
Denis & La Fontaine	1987	*				*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		Note: 3 studies (2 interview, 1 survey)

Appendix 1a: Export Research Methods

		Research Focus			Research Method			Dependent Variables											
Authors	Year	Exporter	Importer	Unmatched Exp. & Imp.	Dyadic	Mail / Phone Survey	Personal Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	Export Sales	Export Sales Growth	Export Intensity	Change in Export Intensity	# of Export Markets	Export Profitability	Export Profit Intensity	Market Share	Other	Other Variables or Comments
Diamantopoulos & Inglis	1988	*				*						*							Note: Used to differentiate export involvement levels
Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmich	1994	*				*													• Compiled a 5-item composite performance indicator as a dependent variable
Dichtl, Koeglmaier & Meuler	1990	*				*													• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy (Survey supported by interview survey)
Domínguez & Sequeira	1993	*				*	*												• Export Volume (both used for cluster analysis)
Donthu & Kim	1993	*				*					*								
Enderwick & Akoorie	1994	*				*													• Major Export Award used to denote successful exporters
Evangelista	1994	*				*													• Exporter satisfaction with performance
Fletcher	1996	*				*													• Psychic distance
Ford, Lawson & Nichols	1982	*				*		*											• Case Studies (8)
Ford & Posson	1982			*		*													• Tabulations
Fraser & Hite	1990a	*				*						*							
Fraser & Hite	1990b	*				*											*		• ROI
Gant sky	1989	*				*		*											• Case studies (18)
Garnier	1982	*				*													• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
Gomez-Mejia	1988	*				*													• Composite (3 items): Change in Int'l Market Share; Export Intensity vs Industry
Goodnow & Hansz	1972	*				*													• Market Entry Strategies
Gripsrud	1990	*				*													• Attitudes towards future exports
Grønhaug & Lorentzen	1982	*				*	*												• Export Strategies
Haar & Ortiz-Buonafina	1995	*				*													• Internationalisation Stages
Havla & Sandström	1993			*		*	*												• Descriptive
Hedlund & Kvemeland	1985	*				*	*												• Tabulated results only
Holzmüller & Kasper	1990	*				*	*												Note: Used for exporter/Non-Exporter dichotomy
Holzmüller & Kasper	1991	*				*	*				*	*							
Hook & Czinkota	1988	*				*	*												• Simple Percentages & Tabulation
Ito & Puck	1993	*				*			*	*	*								Note: Used statistical databases
Johansson & Vahlne	1977	*				*		*											• Case Study to build theory
Johansson & Nonaka	1993	*				*			*										• Descriptive Article
Johnson, Cullen, Sakano & Takemura	1996			*		*	*												• Trust
Johnston & Czinkota	1982	*				*													• Export Motivation - proactive versus reactive
Joynt	1982	*				*	*												• Nonparametric tests
Joynt & Webb	1985	*				*			*										• Grounded Theory
Karafakioglu	1986	*				*	*			*									Note: Used to classify exporters
Katsikeas	1994	*				*	*												• Factor Analysis; PCA
Katsikeas & Piercy	1991		*			*	*												• Comparative Analysis (t - Test)
Katsikeas & Piercy	1993	*				*	*												• Degree of Adaptation
Katsikeas, Deng & Wortzel	1997	*				*	*												• Export Stage
Kau & Tan	1989	*				*	*												• Nonparametric tests
Kaynak	1992	*				*	*												• Chi-Square & t-Tests
Kaynak & Kolhari	1984	*				*	*												• Rankings & Comparisons
Kaynak & Kuan	1993	*				*	*			*	*	*			*	*			Note: Used to distinguish high & low performers
Kaynak & Stevenson	1982	*				*	*												• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy & industry groups
Kedia & Chhokar	1986	*				*	*												• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
Kirpalani & Machloush	1980	*				*	*				*	*							
Kieh & Roth	1990	*				*	*												• Export channel structure
Kieh, Frazier & Roth	1990	*				*	*												• Distribution channel mode
Kiehkniel & Verspagen	1990	*				*	*				*	*							
Kiehschmidt & Cooper	1984	*				*	*				*	*							
Koh	1991	*				*	*												• Nonparametric test; ANOVA
Koh & Robicheaux	1988	*				*	*												• Export profitability compared to the domestic profitability
Kotabe & Omura	1989		*			*	*												• Frequency tables; ANOVA
Kraft & Chung	1992	*				*	*												• Chi-square
Kumcu, Hancar & Kumcu	1995	*				*	*												Note: Non-Exporter survey only
Lee & Brash	1978	*				*	*												• Export initiation process
Lee & Yang	1990	*				*	*				*	*							• Relative export growth (3 measures); Relative export profitability (3 measures)
Leonidou	1989a	*				*	*												• Comparative Analysis (Z statistic)
Leonidou	1989b			*		*	*												• Satisfaction; (Note: Comparative Analysis -- Means)
Liu, Sharkey & Kim	1993	*				*	*												• Level of export involvement
Liu, Sharkey & Kim	1995	*				*	*				*	*							
Llanes & Melgar	1993		*			*	*												• Factor analysis (Note: 3 related studies)
Louter, Ouwerkerk & Bakker	1991	*				*	*				*	*	*	*	*	*			• Importance of exporting; relative profit; objectives
Madsen	1989	*				*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*			Note: Performance measured as an average of 2 years
Marr	1984		*			*	*												• Utility Value rankings
Marr	1987		*			*	*												• Utility values
McGuinness & Little	1981	*				*	*				*	*							
Moon & Lee	1990	*				*	*				*	*							• 4 other quantitative & qualitative measures - stage of internationalisation
		*				*	*				*	*							

Appendix 1a: Export Research Methods

		Research Focus				Research Method				Dependent Variables									
Authors	Year	Exporter	Importer	Unmatched Exp. & Imp.	Dyadic	Mail / Phone Survey	Personal Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	Export Sales	Export Sales Growth	Export Intensity	Change in Export Intensity	# of Export Markets	Export Profitability	Export Profit Intensity	Market Share	Other	Other Variables or Comments
Morgan & Katsikeas	1998	•				•						•							• Factor analysis and regression
Morgan & Sarlis	1991			•		•		•											• Nonparametric test
Munro & Beamish	1987					•					•		•						
Naidu & Prasad	1994	•				•						•							• Also used 4 subjective measures, aggregated to a composite measure
Namiki	1989	•				•						•							• Self-assessed performance measure
Namiki	1988a	•				•													• Self assessment by exporter - growth & profitability of exports - 9-point scale
NZ Trade Development Board	1992		•					•											• Qualitative Case Study
O'Grady	1996	•				•													• Psychic distance (Note: Stage 1 was 10 case studies)
O'Rourke	1985	•				•					•		•						
Ogram	1982	•					•				•								• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
Piercy	1981a	•				•													• Exporter internationalisation (passive/active)
Piercy	1981b	•				•													• Tables & ranking
Rabho	1980	•				•													• Descriptive
Ramasathan & Patton	1994	•				•													• Channel structure (direct versus indirect exports)
Ramaswamy, Kroeck & Penforth	1996	•					•		•				•						• Degree of internationalisation
Raven, McCullough & Tansuhaj	1994	•				•						•			•				• Satisfaction, Performance (domestic vs export)
Reid	1982	•				•						•							• New markets; new products; number of countries
Reid	1983	•				•	•						•						• New markets; new products; number of countries
Reid	1986	•				•					•	•	•						
Reid	1987	•				•													Note: used for regression
Rosson	1984						•												• Case Studies
Rosson	1987	•				•													• Changes over time (1978 - 1985)
Rosson & Ford	1982			•		•					•	•							• Subs satisfaction; cooperation; overall satisfaction
Samie & Walters	1990	•					•						•		•				• Planning; Perceptions of Export; Organisation Structure; Market Research
Samie, Walters & DuBois	1993	•																	• Self-initiated Exporting
Sarathy	1982	•						•											• Export dependence--profitability (Note: Data source not identified)
Schlegelmich	1986	•				•							•						• Exporter / Non-Exporter / High Exporter
Seifert & Ford	1989	•				•													• Percentages, ANOVA
Seringhaus	1987	•					•												• Use of trade missions for market entry
Seringhaus & Mayer	1988	•					•												• Use of trade missions for market entry
Simpson & Kujawa	1974	•				•													• Export Initiation
Sood & Adams	1984	•				•					•				•				• Years in Exporting
Styles & Ambler	1994	•				•					•	•	•						• Strategic objectives; brand equity (26-item measure)
Sullivan	1994	•						•											• Degree of internationalisation (Note: data sourced from databases)
Sullivan & Bauerschmidt	1990	•				•													• Internationalisation stage
Terpsira & Yu	1990						•												• Case Study
Tesar & Tarleton	1982	•				•													• Aggressive versus passive exporters
Thach & Ailinn	1991	•				•						•							
Thirkell & Osborne	1995	•				•						•	•						• 3 other self-assessed performance measures
Tooke	1984	•				•													
Turnbul	1987	•						•											• Qualitative analysis
Wagner	1995	•										•							Note: Used confidential government database - Statistics Office in Germany
Walters	1985	•				•													• Export Ranking
Walters	1993	•				•					•	•	•		•				
Walters & Samie	1990	•				•						•	•		•				
Whitelock	1987	•						•											• Case Study
Wiedersheim-Paul, Olson & Webb	1978	•					•												• Pre-Export Activity
Yaprak	1985	•				•													• Exporter / Non-Exporter dichotomy
Yavas, Cavusgil & Tuncab	1987	•	•			•													• Supplier Country Perceptions

Appendix 1b: Export Variables Researched

Authors	Year	Public Policy Influences		Non-Exporters	Discontinued Exporters	Internationalization			Internal Influences			Other	Other Variables or Comments
						Export Stages	Export Initiation	Psychic/Geographic Distance	Decision Maker Characteristics	Strategy	Competencies	Firm Characteristics	
Abdel-Malek	1978			*								*	
Akcorrie & Scott	1996											*	Export Intensity; Psychic Dispersion of International Operations
Aksoy & Kaynak	1994					*	*		*	*	*	*	Developed 7 general criteria for success
All & Masters	1988								*	*	*	*	
Ali & Slim	1996											*	Psychic Distance (National Culture; Business Practices; Communication)
Ali & Swiercz	1991											*	
Amine & Cavusgil	1986								*	*	*	*	
Anderson & Coughlan	1987								*	*	*	*	Asset Specificity; product age; service requirements; country; legal restrictions; patents
Angelmar & Pras	1984								*	*	*	*	
Axinn	1988								*	*	*	*	
Axinn, Savitt, Sinkula & Thach	1995								*	*	*	*	
Axinn, Sinkula & Thach	1994								*	*	*	*	
Ayal	1982										*	*	Note: nine industry level measures for independent variables
Ayal & Hirsch	1982										*	*	Note: nine industry level measures for independent variables
Barrett & Wilkinson	1985	*	*								*	*	
Bauerschmidt, Sullivan & Gillespie	1985	*	*								*	*	
Beamish & Munro	1987								*	*	*	*	
Beamish, Craig & McLallen	1993								*	*	*	*	
Bello & Barksdale	1986								*	*	*	*	
Bello & Gilliland	1997						*		*	*	*	*	Market Volatility; Process Control; Output Control; Flexibility
Bello & Lohita	1995								*	*	*	*	Asset Specificity
Bello & Williamson	1985								*	*	*	*	20 variables, loading on four measures
Bijnholt & Zwart	1994								*	*	*	*	Dependency
Bilky	1982								*	*	*	*	
Bilky	1985								*	*	*	*	
Bilky	1987								*	*	*	*	Type of product; destination market; export intensity
Bilky & Tesar	1977					*	*		*	*	*	*	
Bodur	1994					*	*		*	*	*	*	
Bonaccorsi	1992								*	*	*	*	
Brady & Bearden	1979								*	*	*	*	
Brash	1978					*	*		*	*	*	*	
Brooks & Rosson	1982	*				*	*		*	*	*	*	
Caloi	1994								*	*	*	*	
Caughey & Chetty	1994								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil	1982	*				*	*		*	*	*	*	Export intensity; patents
Cavusgil	1985								*	*	*	*	Export market research; market entry strategies
Cavusgil	1984a								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil	1984b					*	*		*	*	*	*	Export Intensity; Export Profits
Cavusgil	1984c					*	*		*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil & Kaynak	1982								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil & Kirpalani	1993								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil & Naor	1987								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil & Nevin	1981								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil & Zou	1994								*	*	*	*	
Cavusgil, Bilky & Tesar	1979								*	*	*	*	
Chan	1992								*	*	*	*	Channel Directness
Chaney & Goddard	1996								*	*	*	*	Export Sales; # Countries; Financial, Communication, Management & Training Measures
Chetty	1993b	*							*	*	*	*	Networks
Chetty & Hamilton	1993a								*	*	*	*	Export Sales; Export Intensity
Chiesi & Knight	1981								*	*	*	*	Attitude Survey of Japanese Importers of US products
Christensen, da Rocha & Germer	1987	*	*		*				*	*	*	*	Sales
Cooper & Kleinschmidt	1985								*	*	*	*	
Culpan	1989	*							*	*	*	*	
Cunningham	1980								*	*	*	*	Purchase strategies
Cunningham & Spiegel	1971	*							*	*	*	*	
Czinkota & Johnston	1983								*	*	*	*	Note: Firm Size
da Roche, Christensen & da Cunha	1990								*	*	*	*	
Daca	1990								*	*	*	*	Business relationships; culture
Delli	1994				*				*	*	*	*	Number of foreign customers
Daniels & Robles	1982								*	*	*	*	Export Intensity; Complexity
Das	1994								*	*	*	*	Industry characteristics; COO; dependence; conflict
Dau & Thirkell	1996	*							*	*	*	*	Nature of goods; market orientation; customer focus
Dean & Myers	1996					*	*		*	*	*	*	Financial Impediments; 42 export barriers
DeLuz	1993	*							*	*	*	*	Quality control
Denis & Despesteau	1985	*							*	*	*	*	LDC/OIC Export Sales
Denis & La Freniere	1987					*	*		*	*	*	*	Export Intensity growth

Appendix 1b: Export Variables Researched

Authors	Year	Public Policy Influences			Internationalization			Internal Influences			Other Variables or Comments
		Non-Exporters	Discontinued Exporters	Export Stages	Export Initiation	Psychic/Geographic Distance	Decision Maker Characteristics	Strategy	Competencies	Firm Characteristics	
Diamantopoulos & Inglis	1988	•			•	•		•	•	•	
Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmich	1994							•	•	•	
Dicht, Kögelmayr & Müller	1990				•						• Export potential; financial variables
Dominquez & Sequelra	1993										
Donihu & Kim	1993	•									
Enderwick & Akoorie	1994										
Evangelista	1994							•	•	•	• Export Intensity
Fletcher	1996			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Ford, Lawson & Nicholls	1982							•	•	•	
Ford & Rossen	1992			•							• Sales Trend; Length of Association; Commitment; Conflict
Fraser & Hite	1990a			•				•	•	•	
Fraser & Hite	1990b							•	•	•	
Ganitsky	1989				•		•	•	•	•	
Garnier	1982				•		•	•	•	•	
Gomez-Mejia	1988			•				•	•	•	
Goodnow & Hansz	1972										• Country; macro-level economic indicators
Gripsrud	1990							•	•	•	
Grønhaug & Lorentzen	1982							•	•	•	• Export Intensity
Haar & Ortiz-Buonafina	1995			•							
Havila & Sandström	1993							•	•	•	• Dyads versus Triads
Hedland & Kvernland	1985							•	•	•	
Holzmüller & Kasper	1990							•	•	•	
Holzmüller & Kasper	1991	•					•	•	•	•	• Organisation Culture
Hook & Czinkota	1988	•			•			•	•	•	
Ito & Pucik	1993							•	•	•	• Asset size; market position
Johansson & Vahlne	1977			•				•	•	•	• Theoretical model development based on case studies
Johansson & Nonaka	1983							•	•	•	
Johnson, Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi	1996							•			• Cultural sensitivity; Similarity; Complementarity; Integration
Johnston & Czinkota	1982	•						•	•	•	
Joynt	1982	•		•			•	•	•	•	• Export Intensity
Joynt & Welch	1985	•		•			•				• Government Sponsored Export Groups
Karatakdouglu	1986	•		•				•	•	•	
Katsikeas	1994								•	•	• Export Intensity
Katsikeas & Piercy	1991								•	•	• Conflict
Katsikeas & Piercy	1993							•	•	•	• Satisfaction
Katsikeas, Deng & Wortzel	1997	•		•				•	•	•	• Environmental Factors
Kau & Tan	1989	•	•				•	•	•	•	
Kaynak	1992	•		•			•	•	•	•	• Export Intensity
Kaynak & Kolhari	1984	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	
Kaynak & Kuan	1993				•		•	•	•	•	
Kaynak & Stevenson	1982				•						
Kadla & Chhokar	1986	•		•							
Kirilpalani & MacIntosh	1990	•						•	•	•	
Klein & Roth	1990				•			•	•	•	• Transaction specific assets
Klein, Frazier & Roth	1990										• Channel integration; export intensity; asset specificity; uncertainty
Kleinkeat & Verspage	1990								•	•	
Kleinschmidt & Cooper	1984								•	•	
Koh	1991							•	•	•	
Koh & Robicheaux	1988							•	•	•	
Kotabe & Omura	1989										• International sourcing strategies
Kraft & Chung	1992							•			
Kumcu, Hecar & Kumcu	1995	•		•				•	•	•	
Lee & Brash	1978			•				•	•	•	
Lee & Yang	1990							•	•	•	
Leonidou	1989a							•	•	•	• Conflict; Cooperation; Satisfaction
Leonidou	1989b							•	•	•	• Conflict; Cooperation; Satisfaction
Lim, Sharkey & Kim	1993						•	•	•	•	
Lim, Sharkey & Kim	1995	•						•	•	•	
Llana & Melgar	1993						•	•	•	•	• Aggressiveness; Trustworthiness; Power; Cooperation
Louler, Ouwerkerk & Bakker	1991			•	•			•	•	•	
Madsen	1989				•			•	•	•	
Marr	1984							•	•	•	
Marr	1987							•	•	•	• Customer Service
McGuinness & Little	1981							•	•	•	
Moon & Lee	1990			•				•	•	•	
Morgan & Katsikeas	1998							•	•	•	
Morgan & Sarris	1991							•	•	•	• Note: Two-stage study based on market needs and suppliers failure to respond

Appendix 1b: Export Variables Researched

Authors	Year	Public Policy Influences	Non-Exporters	Discontinued Exporters	Internationalization		Internal Influences				Other	Other Variables or Comment
					Export Stages	Export Initiation	Psychic/Geographic Distance	Decision Maker Characteristics	Strategy	Competencies	Firm Characteristics	
Munro & Beamish	1987											Conflict
Naidu & Prasad	1994											
Namiki	1989											Growth pattern
Namiki	1988a											
NZ Trade Development Board	1992											
O'Grady	1998											11 other variables, related to psychic distance
O'Rourke	1985											
Ogram	1982											
Piercy	1981a											Export Intensity
Piercy	1981b											Export Intensity
Rabino	1980											Export Intensity
Ramaseshan & Patton	1994											International heritage
Ramaswamy, Kroeck & Renforth	1996											Export Intensity; Ratio of O/seas Subsidiaries
Raven, McCullough & Tansuha	1994											
Reld	1982											
Reld	1983											
Reld	1986											
Reld	1987											Export Sales; Export Growth
Rosson	1984											Commitment; Satisfaction; Disagreement
Rosson	1987											Environmental Changes; Interactions
Rosson & Ford	1982											Stake in the Relationship; Decision making in the dyad; Intensity of contact; Conflict
Samlee & Walters	1990											
Samlee, Walters & DuBois	1993											Relative Export Profit Margin; Export Intensity
Sarathy	1982											11 financial variables
Schlegelmilch	1986											194 independent variables
Seifert & Ford	1989a											Sales; Export Sales
Seringhaus	1987											
Seringhaus & Mayer	1988											
Simpson & Kujawa	1974											
Sood & Adams	1984											Information gathering; general market info; specific market info; experiential market info; learning styles
Styles & Ambler	1994											
Sullivan	1994											Export Intensity; Profit Intensity; FSTS; ROI; AI; FATA; OSTS
Sullivan & Bauerschmidt	1990											
Terspra & Yu	1990											Piggybacking
Tesar & Tarleton	1982											Export Intensity
Thach & Axinn	1991											
Thirkell & Osborne	1995											Marketing Orientation
Tookey	1964											
Turnbull	1987											Export Intensity
Wagner	1995											
Walters	1985											Export Intensity
Walters	1993											
Walters & Samlee	1990											
Whitelock	1987											Export Intensity; Sales Growth
Wiedersheim-Paul, Olson & Welch	1978											
Yaprak	1985											
Yavas, Cavusgil & Tuncaip	1987											Country Differences in Perceptions

Appendix 2: Relationship Marketing Variables Researched

Authors	Year	Research Focus		Research Method		Variables																	Comments					
		Seller	Buyer	Unmatched Buyer & Seller	Dyadic	Mail Survey (Phone Survey)	Personal Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	Duration of Relationships	Relationship Development	Relationship Maintenance	Interpersonal Relationships	Relationship Quality	Dyadic Relationships	Power, Influence & Control	Conflict	Structural Bonds/Dependence	Relationship Status / Stages	Satisfaction	Trust	Relational Norms		Cooperation / Interaction	Communication	Commitment	Expectations	Other
Andeleeb	1995																											Laboratory Experiment
Anderson & Narus	1984																											Profit
Anderson & Narus	1990																											
Anderson & Weitz	1989																											Reputation, Congruence
Anderson & Weitz	1992																											Perceptions, Exclusivity, Fairness
Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann	1984																											Quality
Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson	1994																											Networks
Babin & Griffin	1998																											Attribution; behavioural outcomes
Barksdale, Johnson & Suh	1997																											
Barnes, Jacobs & Hadjimarcou	1996																											
Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux & Simpson	1992																											6 influence strategies; relationalism; governance
Buchanan	1992																											Goals; Uncertainty
Catalone & Gassenheimer	1991																											Supplier performance
Callaghan, McPhail & Yau	1995																											RM Orientation; reciprocity; bonding; empathy
Camobell	1988																											
Chebat, Savard & Fillard	1998																											
Crosby	1991																											
Crosby & Stephens	1987																											Customer Service
Crosby, Evans & Cowles	1990																											
Cullen, Johnson & Sakano	1995																											Performance; Strategic Importance
Cunningham & Horne	1988																											Note; Methodology Unclear
Dant & Schul	1992																											Critical Issues: solidarity; integrity; conflict resolution
Dion, Easterling & Miller	1995																											Performance; Myers-Briggs (NB: not dyadic)
Doney & Cannon	1997																											15 other variables
Dorsch, Swanson & Kelley	1998																											Customer orientation; ethics
Fillard & La Pierre	1997																											Customer participation; service quality; error recovery
Ford & Rosson	1982																											Adaptation; distance; stake; experience; uncertainty
Frazier	1983																											
Frazier & Kale	1989																											Note: Methodology Unclear
Frazier & Rody	1991																											Role performance
Frazier & Summers	1984																											
Frazier, Gill & Kale	1989																											Role performance; coercion
Ganesan	1993																											Problem solving strategy; negotiations
Ganesan	1994																											Environment; Reputation; Past Experiences
Gassenheimer & Scandura	1993																											Relative market position
Gemünden	1985																											EDP buyer documentation
Gilbert, Young & O'Neal	1994																											JIT production
Goodman, Fikman, Leach & Snyder	1995																											Involvement; Continuity; Personalize; Individualize
Gordon, McKeage & Fox	1998																											Opportunism (Note: simulation)
Gundlach, Achrol & Mentzer	1995																											Roles (Note: Three layers – triadic)
Hakko & Laaksonen	1998																											Customer Importance; Complexity
Hallén, Johanson & Sayed-Mohamed	1991																											25 other variables
Han, Wilson & Dent	1993																											Understanding; closeness; support
Havila & Sandström	1993																											Customisation; Automation; Volumes
Heide	1984																											8 other variables
Heide & John	1990																											3 other variables
Heide & John	1992																											Perceived performance; intentions
Hubbert, Bitner & Klein	1996																											15 other measures
Jacobucci & Ostrom	1996																											4 other variables
Johnson, Cullen, Sakano & Takenouchi	1996																											Influence
Johnson, Sakano & Onzo	1990																											
Johnson, Sakano, Cole & Onzo	1993																											
Joseph, Joseph & Ford	1996																											
Joshi & Arnold	1998																											Compliance (Note: role playing simulation)
Joshi & Stump	1998																											Opportunism
Joshi & Wehrli	1994																											
Kale	1989																											
Kalwani & Ford	1995																											
Kalwani & Narayandas	1995																											Net Sales; Inventory T/O; ROI; Gross Margin
Kasouf & Celuch	1997																											Relationship orientation; collaborative relationships
Katsikeas & Piercy	1991																											
Katsikeas & Piercy	1992																											4 other variables
Keep, Hollander & Dickinson	1998																											Interdependence
Keep, Hollander & Dickinson	1998																											Issues; role performance; motivational investment
Kim & Frazier	1997																											Note: Tested 3 types of commitment
Kim & Frazier	1998																											
Knox & White	1991																											

Appendix 2: Relationship Marketing Variables Researched

Authors	Year	Research Focus			Research Method		Variables																	Comments				
		Seller	Buyer	Unmatched Buyer & Seller	Dyadic	Mail Survey (Phone Survey)	Personal Interview Survey	Case Study	Other	Duration of Relationships	Relationship Development	Relationship Maintenance	Interpersonal Relationships	Relationship Quality	Dyadic Relationships	Power, Influence & Control	Conflict	Structural Bonds/Dependence	Relationship Status / Stages	Satisfaction	Trust	Relational Norms	Cooperation / Interaction		Communication	Commitment	Expectations	Other
Kohli	1989	•				•										•											•	Situational characteristics; firm characteristics
Kozak & Cohen	1997			•			•											•				•			•		•	12 other variables
Kumar, Scheer & Steenkamp	1995		•				•										•									•		
Kumar, Scheer & Steenkamp	1998															•											•	Punitive Action; Punitive Capability
LaBahn & Kohli	1997						•										•										•	5 other variables
Lagace, Dahlstrom & Gassenheimer	1991	•								•												•					•	Expertise; Ethics; Characteristics
Landros & Monczka	1989		•					•									•							•	•			
Lascelles & Dale	1989	•																										
Lawson	1997			•				•			•	•									•						•	5 other variables
Lee	1998	•					•			•																		7 other variables
Leonidou	1989a																											
Leonidou	1989b						•										•	•					•					
Leuthesser	1995																											
Leuthesser	1997		•											•													•	8 Other variables
Leuthesser & Kohli	1995						•													•							•	Share of Business; Signalling; Importance
Lewin & Johnston	1997									•													•	•	•		•	3 other variables
Loftus & Meyers	1994									•																	•	Buying criteria (4 items)
Low	1997																										•	Networks; Reputation
Lusch & Brown	1996		•							•												•					•	Contract form; relational behaviour; performance (6)
Lusch & Ross	1985						•										•											
MacIntosh & Gentry	1995		•																							•	Relationship orientation; Accountability; Search	
Melcail, Frear & Krihnan	1990																							•			•	Experience; Adaptation; Info exchange (not dyadic)
Mohr, Fisher & Nevin	1996																										•	Integration; Bidirectionality; Formality
Moore	1991			•															•								•	Sales Trend
Moorman, Deshpandé & Zaltman	1993						•																				•	Researcher & User Characteristics
Moorman, Zaltman & Deshpandé	1992																								•	•	•	Involvement; Market Research Utilisation
Morgan & Hunt	1994																	•									•	Termination; Shared Values; Acquiescence
Morris, Brunyee & Page	1998	•																									•	20 other variables
Noordewier, John & Nevin	1990																										•	12 other variables
Nowak, Boughton & Pereira	1997																										•	4 other variables
Palmer	1995b		•																								•	Relationship marketing tactics
Palmer & Bejou	1994											•	•														•	Empathy; Expertise; Ethics
Palmer & Maani	1995		•																								•	Value; Quality; Flexibility; Delivery
Paun	1997			•													•										•	Planning; performance; 4Ps; EDP Access
Provan & Gassenheimer	1994		•																									
Prus	1987		•																								•	Repeat customers; Loyalty
Rosenberg & Stern	1971			•																								Note: supported by interviews
Ross, Anderson & Weitz	1997																										•	6 other variables
Rosson	1984																										•	3 other variables (Successful & troubled relationships)
Rosson	1987	•																										Note: linked to 1984 study
Schjins & Schroder	1996		•																								•	Involvement; Attractiveness; Rel. Strength
Siguaw, Simpson & Baker	1998																										•	Market Orientation
Simpson & Mayo	1997																										•	Flexibility; mutuality; solidarity
Simpson & Wren	1997																										•	11 other variables
Smith	1998		•																								•	Expertise; Relationalism; Characteristics
Smith & Barclay	1997																										•	8 other variables
Smith, Ross & Smith	1997																										•	8 other variables
Sriram & Mummalaeni	1990		•																								•	Source Loyalty
Stauble																												
Stern, Thompson & Arnould	1998																										•	Brand Switching; Dissonance
Swan & Nolan	1985																											
Turnbull & Wilson	1989	•																										
Wagner, Fleming, Mangold & LaForge	1994	•																									•	
West	1991																											
Westbrook & Peterson	1998		•																								•	Identified 13 service quality factors
Weyn & Trocchia	1996																										•	Attribution
Williams, Han & Qualls	1998		•																								•	Social Bonds (Hofstede's 4 Culture Measures)
Wilson & Vlosky	1997	•																									•	11 other variables
Wray, Palmer & Bejou	1994																										•	4 other variables
Young & Wilkinson	1989		•																								•	Environmental Factors
Young, Gilbert & McIntyre	1996	•																									•	4 other variables

Appendix 3: Other (Non-Exporting) Empirical Research

Authors	Year	Research Focus	Research Method	Comments
Adler & Graham	1988	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation
Bantling, Ford, Gross & Holmes	1985	Buyers	Mail Survey	Organisational buying behaviour
Brookshaw & Terziovski	1997	Buyers	Mail Survey	TQM and buyer satisfaction with suppliers
Bunn	1993	Buyers	Mail Survey	Buying decision process -- taxonomy
Cameron & Shipley	1985	Buyers	Mail Survey	Product differentiation, price and quality influence buying (US)
Cardoza & Cagley	1971	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Buying Simulation
Cavusgil & Yavas	1987	Importers	Interview/Survey	Supplier selection in international markets (Saudi Arabia)
Chao, Scheuing, Dubas & Mulalaneni	1993	Buyers	Interview/Survey	Supplier Selection criteria (China)
Christopher, Landoni & Gattorna	1985	Buyers	Mail Survey	Managing international customer service factors
Clopton	1984	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Negotiation Simulation
Czinkota	1995	Other	Interview	Japanese distribution system
Day, Fox & Huszagh	1988	National Stats	Database	Global segmentation
Dempsey	1978	Buyers	Mail Survey	Vendor selection attributes
Dion & Bantling	1988	Buyers	Mail Survey	Purchasing and negotiation performance of buyers
Ellram	1990	Buyers	Interview	Supplier selection for strategic partnerships
Ellram	1995	Buyers	Case Studies	Total cost of ownership in purchasing
Fornell	1992	Buyers	Database	Customer satisfaction barometer
Frear, Metcalf & Alguire	1992	Buyers	Mail Survey	Nature and scope of offshore sourcing
Ghymn & Jacobs	1993	Importers	Mail Survey	Japanese & US import decisions compared
Graham	1983	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation
Graham	1985	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation - culture
Graham, Kim, Lin & Robinson	1988	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation
Graham, Mintu & Rodgers	1994	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation
Green & Lutz	1980	National Trade	Database	High technology import-export performance (US, Japan)
Håkansson & Wootz	1975	Buyers	Simulation	Supplier selection decisions
Heide & John	1995	Buyers	Mail Survey	Buyer's vendor consideration and switching costs
Hendrick & Ruch	1988	Buyers	Survey & Meeting	Buyer performance appraisals using selection criteria
Kamins, Johnston & Graham	1998	Buyer/Seller	Laboratory	Cross-Cultural Negotiation Simulation
Kogut & Singh	1988	Market Entry	Database	Effects of culture on entry mode choice
Larson & Kulchitsky	1998	Buyers	Mail Survey	Influence of sole sourcing and supplier certification
Lillie & Sparks	1992	Buyers	Interview/Survey	Buyer behaviour -- the importance of service
McGuinness, Campbell & Leontlades	1991	Buyers	Interview/Survey	Reaction to strategies & preference formation in buying (China)
Min & Galle	1991	Buyers	Mail Survey	International purchasing strategies
Monczka, Nichols & Callahan	1992	Buyers	Phone Survey	Purchaser Information needs
Morgan & Blenkinshorn	1985	Buyer/Seller	Interview	Comparison of US and Japanese organisational buying processes
Murphy, Trailer & Hill	1996	Measurement	Database	Comparison of performance measurement alternative
Pliszarodi	1994	Buyer/Seller	Mail Survey	How perceptions of customer service influence relationships
Rajaratnam & McKinney	1995	Sellers	Mail Survey	Changes in marketing in Japan
Rice	1984	Sellers	Interview/Survey	The influence of political uncertainty on international market strategy
Rosenbloom & Warshaw	1989	Buyer/Seller	Mail Survey	Role / function of wholesalers in the distribution channel
Ryans	1988	Sellers	Mail Survey	Market entry strategy and market share
Salvacruz	1996	National Trade	Database	Econometric prediction of agricultural trade potential
Skinner & Gullinan	1985	Buyer/Seller	Survey/Panel	Perceptions of channel control
Smith, Venkatraman & Wortzel	1995	Buyers	Mail Survey	Market strategy / manufacturing-retailer relationship fit
Spekman	1991	Buyers	Mail Survey	International business relationships
Swift	1995	Buyers	Mail Survey	Single versus multiple sourcing and supplier selection criteria
Williams & Spiro	1985	Buyer/Seller	Interview/Survey	Salesperson-customer communications styles
Wilson	1994	Buyers	Interview/Survey	Supplier selection criteria

Appendix 4: Theoretical Articles (by topic, by year)

Authors	Year	Research Focus			Article Focus
		Export	RM	Other	
Blilly	1978	•			Export literature review -- Pre-1978
Ayal & Zif	1979	•			Market expansion strategies, market entry
Cavusgil	1980	•			Internationalisation process of firms
Feld	1981	•			Export stages, process, individual characteristics
Green	1982	•			Effective market planning for exporting
Van Den Bulcke	1982	•		•	Export activities of MNE's
Buckley	1984	•			Role of exporting in MNCs, exporting versus other market service options
Czinkota & Johnston	1985	•			Does sales volume make a difference to exporting -- reply
Green & Allaway	1985	•			Identifying export opportunities using market share changes
Feld	1985	•		•	Does sales volume make a difference to exporting
Thomas & Araujo	1985	•		•	A critical analysis of theories of export behaviour
Huszagh & Huszagh	1987	•			Agricultural exports (macro perspective)
Kamath, Rosson, Patton & Brooks	1987	•			Export success -- a literature review and comment
Kirpalani & Balcome	1987	•			Measures of success -- relevancy
Feld & Rosson	1987	•			Export market entry and expansion and the export decision process
Miesenbock	1988	•			Small exporters -- literature review
Aaby & Slater	1989	•			Literature review from 1978-1989
Johanson & Vahlne	1990	•			Internationalisation process and industrial networks
Young	1990	•			Internationalisation -- Introduction and overview
Enderwick & Wilson	1992	•			Role of government in improving international competitiveness
Melin	1992	•			Internationalisation as a strategy process
Chetty & Hamilton	1993	•			Meta analysis of export literature
da Rocha & Christensen	1994	•			Review of the Brazilian export literature (27 studies)
Flint	1994	•			Measuring success and performance
Hoang	1994	•			Standardisation versus adaptation of products
Holzmueller & Stöhlberger	1994	•			Segmentation of export countries for market selection
Lianes, Hoang & Carreon	1994	•			Firm size -- literature review 1984 - 1994
Madsen	1994	•			A contingency approach to export performance research
Myers	1994	•			Export barriers across stages of export development
Yeoh	1994	•			A conceptual model of entrepreneurship and export performance
Liang	1995	•			Export initiation
Yeoh & Jeong	1995	•			Entrepreneurship, export channel structure and performance
Coviello, Brodie & Munro	1996	•			Market classification scheme
Leonidou & Katsikeas	1996	•			Review of export development models
Liang & Stump	1996	•			Overseas vendor search and evaluation
Karunaratna & Johnson	1997	•	•		Initiating and maintaining export channel relationships
Liang & Parkhe	1997	•			Importer behaviour -- need dyadic perspective of exporting
Evans	1963		•		Selling as a dyadic relationship
McCall	1970		•		The social organisation of relationships -- sociology perspective
Håkansson, Johanson & Wootz	1977		•		Influence tactics in the buyer-seller process
Ford	1981		•		Development of buyer-seller relationships -- stages theory
Berry	1983		•		Relationship marketing concept (first use of term 'relationship marketing')
Gaski	1984		•		Power and conflict in channels of distribution
Frazier & Sheth	1985		•		Attitude-behaviour influence strategies in distribution channels
Spekman & Johnston	1986		•	•	Managing the seller-buyer interface -- relationship management
Wilson & Mummalaneni	1986		•		Bonding and commitment in buyer-seller relationships
Collins, White & Anbil	1987		•		Financial benefits of relationships
Dwyer, Schurr & Oh	1987		•		Developing buyer-seller relationships
Gummerson	1987		•		Developing long-term interactive relationships
De Rosa	1988		•		10 requirements for a buyer-seller partnership
Frazier, Spekman & O'Neal	1988		•		Just-in-time exchange relationships
Morris & Holman	1988		•		Source loyalty -- buyer-seller dyads
Copulsky & Wolf	1990		•		Strategic opportunities using relationship marketing
Czepiel	1990		•		Influence of encounters on relationships
Grönroos	1990		•		A relationship approach to marketing in services
Miles, Arnold & Nash	1990		•		Communication adaptation to relationship stage and buyer communication style
Williams, Spiro & Fine	1990		•	•	Communication as the essence of dyad interaction
Illingsworth	1991		•		Person-to-person relationship marketing
Barlow	1992		•		Relationship marketing, customer service, retail
Barrell	1992		•		Relationship marketing, way ahead for the 90's?
Iacobucci & Hopkins	1992		•		Modelling interactions -- dyadic and network relationships
Oikawa & Tanner	1992		•		Influence of Japanese culture of business relationships
Zimmerman	1992		•		Relationship marketing as a one-on-one customer view
Cunningham & Tynan	1993		•		Use of IT networks and electronic trading in buyer-seller relationships
Gundlach & Murphy	1993		•		Ethical and legal foundations of relationship marketing exchange
Shani & Chalasani	1993		•	•	Implementing a relationship marketing strategy
Ballentine	1994		•		Editorial on relationship marketing special journal issue
Christopher	1994		•		Linking logistics to customer service and relationships
Cronin	1994		•		Analysing buyer-seller dyads
Dabholkar, Johnson & Calley	1994		•		Long-term business-to-business relationship processes
Grönroos	1994		•		A paradigm shift from marketing mix to relationship marketing
Gummerson	1994		•		Broadening and specifying relationship marketing
Gummerson	1994		•		The 30 Rs of relationship marketing
Jackson	1994		•		Relationship selling -- stages, levels, quality, trust & personalities
Jüttner & Wehrli	1994		•		A value system view of relationship marketing
Monczka & Morgan	1994		•		Strategic alliances, supplier relationships and partnerships
Owens	1994		•		The role of specific assets in exchange relationships
Payne	1994		•		Relationship marketing -- customer retention
Payne, Christopher, Clark & Peck	1994		•		Relationship management chain
Robicheaux & Coleman	1994		•		The structure of marketing channel relationships
Wilson & Jantrania	1994		•		The value of a relationship
Anderson	1995		•		Exchange episodes, value creation, business strands, relationship development

Appendix 4: Theoretical Articles (by topic, by year)

Authors	Year	Research Focus			Article Focus
		Export	RM	Other	
Bagozzi	1995		•		Reflections on relationship marketing in consumer markets
Berry	1995		•		Services relationship marketing, levels of relationship marketing, trust
Bilmer	1995		•		Service relationships, relationship development
Cravens	1995		•		Introduction to special issue on relationship marketing
Frazier & Anita	1995		•		Power, norms & communication in channel relationships
Fried & Fried	1995		•		Beyond relationship marketing -- anticipating customer wants
Gronroos	1995		•		The strategy continuum of relationship marketing
Grover	1995		•		Relationship marketing description
Guen	1995		•		Relationship marketing in consumer markets
Hult	1995		•		Cross-functional working relationships -- stages of relationship
Lahinen & Mitala	1995		•		A conceptual framework for relationship marketing
Neri	1995		•		Levels of relationship marketing
Nevin	1995		•		Relationship marketing, distribution channels, relational contracting, relationship development
Palmer	1995a		•		Need to vary relationship marketing tactics across cultures
Peterson	1995		•		Relationship marketing and the consumer -- why enter a relationship?
Sheth & Pravalayar	1995		•		Antecedents & consequences in consumer relationship marketing
Watz & Jap	1995		•		Relationship marketing and distribution channels
Wilson	1995		•		Integrated model of buyer-seller relationships, relationship stages, relationship development
Bresnen	1996		•		Buyer-supplier relationships (industrial)
Dean & Lockshin	1996		•		Research note on product involvement level as it influences relationships
Holmunda	1996		•		Levels of interaction in a business relationship
Kirchmeyer & Patterson	1996		•		Contingency approach to relationship commitment -- contact and continuity
Sheaves & Barnes	1996		•		A social psychology perspective of relationships (must be personal)
El-Ansary	1997		•		The marketing channel context for relationship marketing
Porter & Wilson	1997		•		Relational exchange activities
Karunamitha & Johnson	1997	•	•		Initiating and maintaining export channel relationships
Olsen & Elfram	1997		•		A portfolio approach to supplier relationships
Sheth & Sharma	1997		•		Issues & challenges in supplier relationships
Vlosky & Wilson	1997		•		Partnering and traditional business relationships
Beckett-Camarala, Camarala & Baker	1998		•		Managing internal and external relationships in a changing global environment
Cavusgil	1998		•		International business partnerships
Duncan & Moriarty	1998		•		Communications as a basis for managing relationships
Fournier, Dobscha & Mick	1998		•		Demise of relationship marketing
Gunnarsson	1998		•		Marketing implementation require relationship marketing
Bubb & van Rest	1973		•		Influence of loyalty on industrial buying decisions
Haas	1974		•		New Zealand Government report -- Japan-NZ business relationships
Kison	1975		•		New Zealand Government report -- Japanese food market
Gronroos	1980		•		Long-range marketing strategy design
Harvey & Rothe	1982		•		The marketing of high technology products in foreign markets
Hoyt	1982		•		Priorities in technology transfer between industrial countries
Achrol, Revo & Stern	1983		•		Focal dyad in an external environment
Frazier	1983		•		Interorganisational exchange behaviour in marketing channels
Negandhi	1983		•		Direction of cross-cultural management research
Sheth	1983		•		Cross-cultural influences on the buyer-seller interaction/negotiation process
Kaynak	1984		•		Future research directions in international marketing
Kaynak	1984		•		Using market research in international marketing
Redd	1984		•		Market expansion and internationalisation
Goodnow	1985		•		Market entry analysis (software support)
Terpstra	1985		•		The changing environment of international marketing
Bertrand	1986		•		Creating 'win-win' strategic partnerships
Rosenberg & Thompson	1986		•		Deciphering the Japanese cultural code
Rao & Prebb	1987		•		Standardisation by multinationals
Turnbul	1987		•		Managing supplier-customer interactions
Spekman	1988		•		Strategic supplier selection and long-term relationships
Eisenhardt	1989		•		Building theory from case studies
Richard, Cooper & Wagenheim	1989		•		Customer services unifies marketing and logistics
Carter & Narasimhan	1990		•		International sourcing as a strategic advantage
Clark	1990		•		National characteristics, behaviour & personality
Jones & Monieson	1990		•		History of philosophy of marketing thought
Mohr & Nevin	1990		•		Communication strategies in marketing channels
Thompson	1990		•		Vendor profile analysis for supplier selection
Bartlett & Ghosal	1991		•		Global strategic management
Blenkhorn & Banting	1991		•		Reverse marketing -- marketing to suppliers
Daniels	1991		•		Need more linkages and macro view of international research
Data, Rajagopalan & Rasheed	1991		•		Diversification and performance
Dyer & Wilkins	1991		•		Building theory from case studies (rejoinder to Eisenhardt)
Eisenhardt	1991		•		Building theory from case studies (rejoinder to Dyer & Wilkins)
Mintu & Calatore	1991		•		Comparison of international marketing negotiation approaches
Bergen, Dutta & Walker	1992		•		Applications of Agency Theory in marketing
Giddman	1992		•		Performance of Japanese distribution system
Baker & Fouad	1993		•		Organisational buying behaviour in the Gulf -- explanation
Black & Mendenhall	1993		•		Resolving conflict in a Japanese context
Herbig & O'Hara	1993		•		International procurement and relationships
Rajagopal & Bernard	1993		•		Globalisation stage and international procurement
Anderson	1994		•		Dyadic relational research -- quantitative research methods
Dalgic	1994		•		Market orientation
Hofstede	1994		•		The influence of culture on management and research
Iacobucci, Grayson & Ostrom	1994		•		Customer satisfaction -- cautions
Scollay	1995		•		Southeast Asian trade and investment
Wenslev	1995		•		A critical review of research in marketing -- 3 major subfields

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5a: Exporter Questionnaire

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
International Marketing Survey - New Zealand Exporting
Background Information

Note: In answering these questions, obtain information on what is actually being done not "like to do".

Company Name: _____ Date _____

Company Ownership: Confirm from data already available: _____
Subsidiary of Foreign Company ☐
Number of Employees: _____

When did the company first "go overseas": _____

Export Objectives What was the original reason for your company "going overseas" for sales?

Higher return on investment ☐

Export Objectives Is this still the same, or, has the purpose changed?

Higher return on investment ☐

Export Objectives How would you rate the level of senior management (director/CEO

Interested ☐

Export Objectives Is the contribution from exporting more, less or the same as

More ☐

Communication: What methods of communication do you most frequently

Fax ☐ Personal Meeting ☐

Communication: Are the methods the same for all three countries?

Fax ☐ Personal Meeting ☐

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5a: Exporter Questionnaire

Background Information - Page 2

Distance: If we think of overseas markets as being psychologically distant from NZ, how would you rate the three markets (Australia, Japan, US) relative to NZ?, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the same?

Australia
USA
Japan

Perceived Company Advantages: What advantages do you perceive you have as an international supplier?

Table with 3 columns: Advantages, Aust. or ALL, U.S.A., Japan. Rows include Competitive price, Access to limited resources, Technology, Efficient production methods, Efficient distribution, Unique product, Strong management, Efficient marketing techniques, Exclusive information, Customer service.

Perceived Company Weaknesses: What weaknesses do you perceive you have as an international supplier?

Blank lines for perceived company weaknesses.

Export Growth: After this discussion, I would appreciate the opportunity to gather some statistics related to export sales over the last few years.

Export Market Sales: (NOTE: This data is for classification purposes and will be kept confidential)

Product Sales to:	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	Number of Customers
Australia	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
U.S.A.	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Japan	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
All Products:						
Total Exports	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Total Sales	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Number of Export Markets						

Note: Exports are defined as sales made from the NZ company, regardless of manufacturing source.

Struct. Interview - Exporter

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5a: Exporter Questionnaire

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

International Marketing Survey - New Zealand Exporting

Company Name: _____ Product: _____

(Please complete one schedule per customer)

Customer Name: _____

Description of Trading Relationship

Stage of Development of Customer Relationship:

Emerging
Growing
Mature
Decline

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Length of relationship with this customer:

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
< 1 year	1~2 years	2~3 years	3~4 years	4~5 years	> 5 years

Number of visits to customer in the last 12 months

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
0	1	2	3	4	5 or more

Customer visits to New Zealand:

Yes No Don't
Know

Has your customer visited NZ?

Did your customer visit your company?

Did your company invite your customer?

Did your company pay for the customers
trip?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please indicate the level of the existing relationship)

Does not describes my
relationship at all

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Describes my
relationship very well

When disagreements arise, both sides
work to get at the source of the problem.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

This customer is quite willing to forge a
close alliance with us.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

There are open channels of communication
between us and this customer.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

We want a partner-like relationship with
this customer.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

This customer provides us with as much
notice as possible on changes that will
affect us.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

We have a strong sense of loyalty to this
customer.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

We will dedicate whatever resources and
people it takes to help them.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Each side is able to anticipate the others
intentions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

We trust this customer to deal fairly with
us.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

This customer expects to do business with
us for a very long time into the future.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

The goals of our firm and this customer are
compatible.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Struct. Interview - Exporter

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5a: Exporter Questionnaire

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

International Marketing Survey - New Zealand Exporting

Company Name: _____ Product: _____

(Please complete one schedule per customer)

Customer Name: _____

Trade Difficulties

What trade issues "seriously" Impact your ability to conduct business internationally?

	Sequence Mentioned	No problem at all				Very Serious	Not Applicable
Trade barriers							
Language							
Culture/Customs							
Financing							
Foreign exchange rate fluctuations							
Paperwork							
Political stability							
Travel costs							
Transportation delays							
Transportation costs							
Contract terms							
Nationalism							
Company integrity							
Quality assurance							
Inspection procedure							
Overseas market competition							
International competition							
Distribution system							
Lack of market information							
Length of time to develop relationship							
Other: _____							
Other: _____							
Other: _____							
Other: _____							
Other: _____							
Other: _____							

Struct. Interview - Exporter

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire & Supporting Interview Prompts

5a: Exporter Questionnaire

Other questions to be worked into the right sequence.

1. How do you decide which market to enter?
2. What is your preferred approach for market entry?
3. How do you identify potential overseas customer, agents, partners?
4. How do you develop and build the relationship with your international customer?
5. How would you define relationship quality?
6. How do you build a quality relationship?
7. What ought the company do, but isn't currently?
8. What role do brands play in international transactions?
9. How important is trust to exporting?
10. How do you build trust?

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5b: Importer Questionnaire

(Note: Not to be given to interviewee) University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
International Marketing Survey - Buying Organisation
Background Information

Note: In answering these questions, obtain information on what is actually being done, not "like to do".

Company Name: Date:
Interviewee: Product: Horticulture / Casual & Outdoor Apparel

Supplier Introducing Company:
Company Ownership: Confirm from data already available:
Subsidiary of Foreign Company
Division of Domestic Company
Separate Public Company
Private Company
Owner Operated

Number of Employees:
When did the company first buy from NZ?
When did the company first buy from other countries?

Import Objectives: What was the original reason for your company "going overseas" for supplies?
[Blank lines for response]

Import Objectives: Is this still the same, or, has the purpose changed?
[Blank lines for response]

Supply Objectives: How would you rate the level of commitment to this supplier?
[Blank line for response]
Low
Conditional
Strong
Totally Committed

Supply Objectives: Is the contribution from this product more, less or the same as expected?
[Blank line for response]
More
Same
Less
Don't Know

Communication: What methods of communication do you most frequently use for contacting your overseas supplier?
[Blank line for response]
Fax
Telephone
Letter
Telex
Personal Meeting
Electronic Mail/EDI

Communication: Are the methods the same for all suppliers?
[Blank line for response]
Fax
Telephone
Letter
Telex
Personal Meeting
Electronic Mail/EDI

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5b: Importer Questionnaire

(Note: Not to be given to interviewee) University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
Background Information - Page 2

Distance: If we think of overseas sources as being psychologically distant from here, how would you rate NZ, (Australa, Japan or US), on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the same as yourself?

Form with input fields for New Zealand, Australia, USA, and Japan.

Perceived Supplier Advantages: What are your perceived advantages of this supplier has

Table with 3 columns: Aust., U.S.A., Japan. Rows include: Competitive price, Access to limited resources, Technology, Efficient production methods, Efficient distribution, Unique product, Strong management, Efficient marketing techniques, Exclusive Information, Customer service.

Perceived Supplier Weaknesses: What are this suppliers weaknesses?

Form with 5 horizontal lines for text input.

Supply Sources: What country is your primary sourcing partner?

Form with 2 horizontal lines for text input.

Supply Sources: What percentage of your supplies (for this product) come from NZ? %

Form with 2 horizontal lines for text input.

Supply Sources: Do you use many or a few suppliers?

Form with 2 horizontal lines for text input.

Supply Sources: Are you consciously trying to reduce your number of suppliers?

Form with 2 horizontal lines for text input.

Supply Sources: Does supplier selection criteria vary by country, supplier, product?

Form with 2 horizontal lines for text input.

Note: Exports are defined as sales made from the NZ company, regardless of manufacturing source.
Struct. Interview - Importer

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5b: Importer Questionnaire

(Note: Not to be given to interviewee)

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

International Marketing Survey - Buying Organisation

Company Name: _____

Product: Horticulture / Casual & Outdoor Apparel

Supplier Name: _____

(Please complete one schedule per supplier)

Supplier Characteristics: What are the key characteristics sought by you when selecting suppliers?

Key Supplier Characteristics

	Sequence Mentioned (Unprompted)	Importance of Attribute						Level of Satisfaction					
		Not Important				Very Important	Ranking (last column)	Not at all Satisfied				Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
Dependable delivery													
Product quality													
Product range													
Product durability													
Product adapted to local needs													
Produce to specification													
Personal selling													
Speed of sales quote													
Speed of delivery													
Responsiveness to problems													
Price competitiveness													
Credit/payment terms													
Political stability													
Cost reduction programs													
Stable management													
After sales support/service													
Easy to obtain service													
Advertising/ promotion support													
Packaging													
Labeling													
Trade marks & brands													
Style & appearance of product													
Past sales experience													
Level of commitment to customer													
Dependable for long-term supply													
Mutual trust and knowledge													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													
Other _____													

Please rank the top 5 supplier selection characteristics, for this supplier?

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5b: Importer Questionnaire

(Note: Not to be given to interviewee) University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand
International Marketing Survey - Buying Organisation

Company Name: Product: Horticulture / Casual & Outdoor Apparel

(Please complete one schedule per customer)

Supplier Name:

Supplier Relationship

Stage of Development of Supplier Relationship:

Emerging
Growing
Mature
Decline

Length of relationship with this supplier:

< 1 year
1-2 years
2-3 years
3-4 years
4-5 years
> 5 years

Number of visits by supplier in the last 12 months

0 1 2 3 4 5 or more

Your visits to New Zealand:

Yes No Don't Know
Have you visited NZ?
Did you visit this supplier?
Did your supplier invite you?
Did your supplier pay for the trip?

(Please indicate the level of the existing relationship)

Does not describes my relationship at all Describes my relationship very well

When disagreements arise, both sides work to get at the source of the problem.

We are quite willing to forge a close alliance with this supplier.

There are open channels of communication between this supplier and us.

This supplier want a partner-like relationship with us.

We provide this supplier with as much notice as possible on changes that will affect them.

This supplier has a strong sense of loyalty to us.

They will dedicate whatever resources and people it takes to help us.

Each side is able to anticipate the others intentions.

We trust this supplier to deal fairly with us.

We expect to do business with this supplier for a very long time into the future.

The goals of our firm and this supplier are compatible.

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts
5b: Importer Questionnaire

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

International Marketing Survey - Buying Organisation

Company Name: _____ Product: Horticulture / Casual & Outdoor Apparel

(Please complete one schedule per customer)

Supplier Name: _____

Importing Difficulties

What trade issues "seriously" impact your ability to conduct business with this supplier?

	Sequence Mentioned (Unprompted)	No problem at all				Very Serious	Not Applicable
Trade barriers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture/Customs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign exchange rate fluctuations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation delays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nationalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company integrity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspection procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overseas market competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Distribution system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of market information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Length of time to develop relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Struct, Interview - Importer

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire & Supporting Interview Prompts

5b: Importer Questionnaire

(Note: Not to be given to interviewee)

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

Other questions to be worked into the right sequence.

(Note: Answer in relation to the general supply situation, not a specific supplier)

1. How do you decide from which country to source products?
2. What is your preferred approach for supplier relationships?
(long-term agreements, annual contracts, transaction-based, as needed long-term)
3. How do you identify potential overseas suppliers?
4. How do you develop and build the relationship with your international supplier?
5. How would you define relationship quality? (Note: "relationship quality" is used frequently in the business press and academic journals, but is not clearly defined.)
6. How do you build a quality relationship?
7. What ought the company do, but isn't currently, with relation to your suppliers?
8. What role do brands play in international supplier selection?
9. How important is trust to supplier relationships?
10. How do you build trust? What can a supplier do to gain your trust? Anything else I have not asked you?
11. Is the interpersonal or the organisational relationship more important in working with your suppliers?
12. It has been said that there are product, business and personal relationships in business.
 - Are these different?
 - Is there a structure/heirarchy?
 - How do you think a relationship develops, and can it develop with a foreign supplier to the same extent as a domestic supplier?
13. Does your NZ supplier really understand your needs? How does the NZ supplier compare with other foreign suppliers?
14. Suppliers perform at different levels of satisfaction to your as a buyer:
 - What is the difference between good and bad suppliers?
 - How are NZ suppliers, generally?
 - How is the specific supplier?
15. Internationally there appears to be a trend to fewer suppliers with longer-lasting relationships (the Japanese model),
 - What triggers a change of supplier?
 - How is the new supplier selected?
16. Does how you evaluate your supplier performance change with the stage/length of the relationship?
17. Do your suppliers need to make and specific changes or investments to meet your requirements?
18. Do NZ exporters understand what "commitment" means to a Japanese business person?
19. Do you try to develop long-term, close relationships with your foreign suppliers?

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5c: Interviewee Response Prompts

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

International Marketing Survey - New Zealand Exporting

Key Supplier Characteristics

- Dependable delivery
- Product quality
- Product range
- Product durability
- Product adapted to local needs
- Produce to specification
- Personal selling
- Speed of sales quote
- Speed of delivery
- Responsiveness to problems
- Price competitiveness
- Credit/payment terms
- Political stability
- Cost reduction programs
- Stable management
- After sales support/service
- Easy to obtain service
- Advertising/ promotion support
- Packaging
- Labeling
- Trade marks & brands
- Style & appearance of product
- Past sales experience
- Level of commitment to customer
- Dependable for long-term supply
- Mutual trust and knowledge

Not Important	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div>	<div>4</div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6</div>	Very Important
Not at all Satisfied	<div>1</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div>	<div>4</div>	<div>5</div>	<div>6</div>	Very Satisfied

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire & Supporting Interview Prompts

5c: Interviewee Response Prompts

Analysis Of Relationship

When disagreements arise, both sides work to get at the source of the problem.

This customer is quite willing to forge a close alliance with us.

There are open channels of communication between us and this customer.

We want a partner-like relationship with this customer.

This customer provides us with as much notice as possible on changes that will affect us.

We have a strong sense of loyalty to this customer.

We will dedicate whatever resources and people it takes to help them.

Each side is able to anticipate the others intentions.

We trust this customer to deal fairly with us.

This customer expects to do business with us for a very long time into the future.

The goals of our firm and this customer are compatible.

Does not
describes my
relationship at all

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Describes my
relationship
very well

**Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts**

5c: Interviewee Response Prompts

Trade Difficulties

- Trade barriers**
- Language**
- Culture/Customs**
- Financing**
- Foreign exchange rate fluctuations**
- Paperwork**
- Political stability**
- Travel costs**
- Transportation delays**
- Transportation costs**
- Contract terms**
- Nationalism**
- Company integrity**
- Quality assurance**
- Inspection procedure**
- Overseas market competition**
- International competition**
- Distribution system**
- Lack of market information**
- Length of time to develop relationship**

No Problems

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

 Very Serious

Appendix 5: Mirror Questionnaire
& Supporting Interview Prompts

5d: Financial Information Summary

International Marketing Survey - New Zealand Exporting

University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

(Company Name)
Sample Form Only

Export Market Sales: (NOTE: This data is for classification purposes and will be kept confidential)						
	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>Number of Customers</u>
Horticulture Sales to:						
Woolworths (Australia)	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	
Total Australian Sales	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
Mitsubishi (Japan)	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	
Mitsubishi (Japan)	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	
Total Japan Sales	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
All Products:						
Total Exports	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
Total Sales	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____
Number of Export Markets (Countries)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	

Note: Exports are defined as sales made from the NZ company, regardless of manufacturing source.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H1 <---> HC1

Both are small private companies who are part of the distribution channel. They have over 20 years international experience, with the existing relationship being about 8 years old. The importer buys to fill seasonal demand, but buys from this exporter due to New Zealand's quality and the people they deal with. The exporter wants to maintain market share, at a profit. Both are committed to the business.

The importer perceives the exporter's advantages as knowledge and flexibility, plus the long association. There are no perceived weaknesses. The exporter perceives their advantages as the strong quality base, plus strong management and funding, but they feel they could be more flexible within the supply limitations. There is a common understanding of the supplier selection criteria with no large differences. The importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceives. Relationship perceptions are very similar with only 3 ratings differing.

For the importer, sourcing products is based on market needs, then availability and import restriction, followed by quality, volume and price. Country is not a consideration, except as it concerns import restrictions. The exporter is more opportunistic in identifying opportunities, but then develops a longer term relationship. Potential suppliers and distributors are identified through the industry network. Business is conducted on a 'gentleman's agreement' basis.

Both parties agree that relationships are built on performance. Relationship quality, to the importer, is understanding the market, customer's needs, and their expectations. It is built through communications honesty, supply knowledge and trust, with an underlying requirement for performance. The exporter defines relationship quality as having a personal dimension, with mutual support and trust. It is built through time, contact and performance. Trust is 'absolutely important' to the relationship due to the nature of the industry.

The importer does not believe brands are important and are not worth the investment to establish the brand name. They rely on the exporters to deliver quality products and only require producer brands for tracking purposes. The exporter uses their brand, but does not expect it to be internationally recognisable.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H1 <----> HC2

Both are small private companies, with over 20 years international experience. The importer buys to fill supply gaps due to seasonality. They buy from New Zealand due to superior quality. The exporter is motivated by continuity of contacts and profitability.

The importer's perspective of supplier advantages are their market knowledge, their understanding of problem implications and their flexibility in solving problems. The exporter perceives their heritage and relationships as an advantage, combined with quality, funding and good management. The exporter's weaknesses are perceived to be insufficient flexibility and focusing on long-term importers rather than being "an out-and-out trader."

The supplier selection criteria is rated higher in importance by the importer with two criteria having large differences. Two of the 'top 5' criteria match. The exporter's and importer's satisfaction perceptions are very similar. The overall average relationship ratings are the same, however there are two criteria with large differences.

The importer sources product based on the availability and quality of the product, independent of the country. The importer may seek new sales opportunistically, but they usually rely on existing importers. Both use the industry network for new contacts.

Relationships are developed by the importer by working closely with the supplier and working in the market. The exporter is very performance oriented, with social-side support. Trust is "all you have" in the industry and the importer assumes trust until it is lost, but feel this may be a naive approach. The exporter tries to do the business well so trust develops. Relationship quality, to the importer, means quality of product, quality of the manager and level of trust. It is developed through commitment to the market and being a market leader in supply (volume, quality). The exporter perceives relationship quality as a personal relationship and mutual support. It is built through time, contact and building trust.

The importer doesn't consider brands to be important and supports this with reports of consumer level research. The brand is important to the exporter, but they recognise the difficulty of getting the brand established.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H1 <----> HC3

Both are private companies, involved in the distribution channel, with extensive international experience. This relationship is only 2~3 years old. The importer seeks an off-season supply of quality products to provide price stability in the local market. The exporter seeks to profitably grow the business. Both are committed to the business.

The importer perceives the exporter's strengths as the personal relationship with the importer and the quality of the information provided. Their weaknesses are personnel changes and unstable prices. The exporter perceives their advantages as their trading history, credibility and their people. They perceive weaknesses as their limited capital and continuity of supply.

The importer rates supplier selection criteria at a higher level of importance than the exporter with four individual criteria having large differences. Only one of the 'top 5' criteria agree. The importer is less satisfied than the exporter perceives. Relationship perceptions are similar, with the importer more cautious about the rated level.

The importer selects suppliers based on their "credibility to deliver a good quality product" using references and sample product. The channel determines the country. This exporter relationship developed from the proactive action of the exporter and the culturally sensitive socialising. The importer begins with transaction-based supply and develops from there. The exporter develops leads through the industry network.

The importer builds relationships gradually, based on the supplier's delivery performance. The exporter supports delivery with socialising. Relationship quality, to the importer is history, credibility and "most important -- mutual understanding." Visits help develop friendship which creates a relationship. The exporter defines relationship quality as a personal relationship with honest people which can withstand performance problems. It is built over a long time with many visits and getting used to each other (mutual understanding).

The importer believes that brand creates credibility. The exporter uses the brand to denote quality and has developed brand knowledge in the export trade with New Zealand.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H1 <---> HC4

Both are private companies with over 20 years international experience. The importer seeks a counter-season supply of quality product. The exporter seeks profitable growth. The importer is committed to the exporter as they "create a 'good feeling'".

The importer perceives the exporter's advantages as good producer relations and their business approach, and their weaknesses as financial strength. The exporter perceives their strength as their history and credibility, plus the people and the level of trust. The major weakness is the limited capital and supply continuity.

The importer rates the supplier selection criteria at a higher level, however only two attributes have large gaps. Three of the 'top 5' criteria match. The importer is less satisfied than the exporter perceives. The importer and exporter rate the relationship as very strong.

The importer seeks the supplier and this determines the country sourced from. The exporter reacts to market demand -- "The market finds us ...". The importer builds the relationship by visits, doing business fairly and socialising. The exporter uses visits and socialising.

Relationship quality, to the importer, is receiving the best quality product. It is built through performance, over time, including quality assurance checks and appropriate response to problems. The exporter defines relationship quality as a personal relationship with honest people which can withstand delivery problems. It is built over time with socialising and delivery performance.

Brands are important to the exporter and importer and the importer perceives that reputation varies by brand.

Trust is "very important" to both companies. The exporter tries to do what they say they will do. The importer expects consistent quality, responsiveness and a dependable exporter brand.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H1 <---> HC5

Both are small private companies with extensive international experience. The importer seeks products which are marketable domestically for a profit. The exporter is seeking to maintain existing business while seeking growth opportunities. The importer perceives the supplier's strengths as consistent supply, quality assured and their integrity. Their weakness is limited product range. The exporter's perceived advantages are the trading history and the volume of product handled. Weaknesses include market nationalism and transportation costs.

The supplier selection criteria and satisfaction ratings are similar with only one large difference. The exporter considers the relationship is at a more advanced stage (mature versus emerging), however the importer commented that they have been right through the cycle and are beginning again. The importer rates the relationship as very strong.

The importer uses many criteria to identify suppliers, however they screen countries based on import restrictions, then check the criteria, including quality, price and reliability. New suppliers are found through the industry network. The exporter identifies markets based on access and competition. Importers are identified through the industry network, TRADENZ and unsolicited faxes. Business is usually on 'gentleman's agreement' with a long-term focus.

The importer requires a marketable product and trust to start a relationship, then performance. The exporter focuses on personal effort to develop trust, then delivery and getting paid. The importer defines relationship quality as adaptability and persistence. The exporter defines relationship quality as mutual trust, communication, commitment and an ability to work through issues. Building relationship quality requires time, frequent contact, reliable delivery, dependability and honesty. The importer perceives trust as very and it is built on integrity, communication, time, presence, honesty and 'vibes'. The exporter includes trust as an integral part of the relationship.

Brands are very important to both companies. Brand means quality and the importer tries to link their customers to the brand. The exporter uses the brand in the distribution channel, but recognises the difficulty at the consumer level.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC6

Both are small private companies with long overseas experience. The importer specialises in New Zealand products. The exporter is seeking to maintain existing business and identify growth opportunities.

The importer perceives the supplier's advantages as versatility in most product lines, good communication and commitment. The supplier's weakness is a lack of brand promotion. The exporter's advantages are their history, personal contact with the people, and the volume of product handled. Weaknesses are being a non-domestic source and transportation costs.

The exporter and importer have similar supplier perceptions and perceptions for the level of satisfaction. Only one of the 'top 5' criteria match. The relationship dimension ratings are almost identical.

The importer identifies the product first, then supplier and availability. This determines country. Both companies use the industry network to gain referrals. The exporter focuses on competition and accessibility to identify opportunities.

The importer builds relationships by doing 'our very best for the product'. The exporter builds a personal relationship through timely and accurate information and delivery performance. Relationship quality, to the importer, is working 'with and not against' them, branded products with promotional support and quality products. Relationship quality is built on consistency of supply, integrity, loyalty and quality. The exporter defines relationship quality as mutual trust, communication and the ability to work through problems. Building relationship quality takes time, frequent contact, information, reliability, dependability and honesty. Trust is very important to the importer. It is built on mutual respect for information which is shared. The exporter considers trust to be an integral part of the relationship.

The importer strongly supports branded products and thinks that unbranded products can only compete on price. The exporter considers brands as important in the distribution channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC7

The importer is significantly larger than the importer. Both have 40 years overseas experience and this relationship is about 15 years old. The relationship continues even though there are now alternate sources which have lower cost.

Both companies have shown commitment through major market and regulatory changes. The importer perceives the supplier's advantage as the people's knowledge of the importer and market, and the weaknesses as transportation scheduling and lower cost competition. The exporter's advantages are counter-season supply of high-quality product, consistency of supply and consistent pricing. Their weakness are pricing and distance.

Supplier selection criteria are rated higher by the importer with one criteria having a large difference. Three of the 'top 5' attributes match. The importer is very satisfied with the supplier. The importer rates the relationship higher and is very positive about it. Sourcing products is based on market need, the quality of product available, price, existing relationships and import restrictions. Country is by default, based on these criteria. Suppliers usually initiate the contact. The exporter looks world-wide for demand for the products available, then ensures accessibility and reviews the competitive situation. Potential distributors are identified through existing networks.

The importer builds the relationship by clear communication to internal staff, extra communication with the supplier, and prompt settlement. The exporter emphasises communication, dependability, credibility and product delivery. The importer defines relationship quality as a "steady supply of quality product" and a "regard and respect for the relationship." To build the relationship requires supply volume, consistent quality, local packaging compliance -- it is performance-based. The exporter defines relationship quality as trust, the ability to absorb difficulties, exchanging business opportunities and time. It is built through regular communications, credibility of action and integrity.

The importer perceives brands as important in the wholesale trade, but not recognised at the retail level. The importer relies on the exporter's brand. The exporter recognises that retail customers do not know the brand, but that it is important at the wholesale level.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC8

The importer has about 10 years international experience; the exporter, 40 years. The relationship is over 10 years old. The importer seeks counter-season supply of product, which can yield a profit. They are committed to the relationship, so long as New Zealand stays competitive for supply. The exporter is 100% export focused.

The importer perceives supplier advantages as a seasonal program, corporate integrity and quality control. The exporter perceives their advantages as counter-season production, high quality product, and consistent supply and price. Weaknesses are price and distance.

The importer rates supplier selection attributes higher than the exporter but there is only one attribute with a large gap. Three of the 'top 5' attributes match. The importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceives and rates the relationship strength higher.

The importer selects countries based on the availability of product to complement the existing product mix -- it is product driven. The exporter seeks product demand world-wide, then screens the countries. New importers are identified through the industry network.

The importer builds a relationship by trusting the exporter and communicating to build the business -- 'relationships are really the bottom line.' The relationship grows based on product delivery and dependability. The exporter focuses on communication, dependability, credibility, product delivery and meeting people. The importer defines relationship quality based on the candour between the parties, timely and correct information, and the overall integrity of both parties. It is built through keeping you word and product delivery. The exporter defines relationship quality as trust which can withstand problems, exchanging business opportunities and time. It is built through communication, credibility and performance. Trust is very important to both parties.

To the importer, brands have value, but it depends on the individual brand. The brand can make sales to retailers easier as they recognise the quality and consistency. The exporter perceives that brands have an important role to play in generating confidence in the buyer.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC10

The importer is a small company with 21 years international experience. The exporter has 40 years international experience and is 100% export focused. The relationship is 15 years old. The importer seeks product world-wide to balance seasonal production. They are committed to New Zealand due to product quality and unrestricted access. The exporter seeks to consolidate and maintain relationships while managing the annual sales to each customer.

The importer perceives the supplier advantages as their earnestness and frequency of visits. Weaknesses are price stability, some quality issues and claim settlement. The exporter's advantages are their history and tradition, reputation, relationships and the image of the product. Weaknesses are incomplete cultural understanding and lack of language skills.

The supplier selection criteria is understood by both parties with no major differences, The customer is less satisfied than the exporter perceives but there is no individual cause for this. The importer rates the relationship lower than the exporter. The importer sources products based on quality, shipping time and price. They seek a supplier who is reliable and a sound company, and they like to build a long-term relationship. The exporter seeks markets based on analysing the climatic conditions, eating habits , transportation effectiveness and the ability to proactively enter the market. Suppliers are chosen based on one-on-one discussions.

The importer develops relationships through exchanging information, negotiations and performance, over a 2~3 year period. The exporter builds the relationship through honesty, integrity, trying to understand their business, social interactions -- "there is a whole myriad of little things." The importer defines relationship quality as personal compatibility, honesty and earnestness, with a "big passion towards the business." It is built through performance and social relationship development. The exporter defines relationship quality as trust, knowledge of the product and situation, history and social interactions. It is built based on the personalities of the people, luck, communication and integrity. Trust is important to both parties.

The importer considers brands to have a limited role, except where they mean reliability and quality. The exporter believes brands are important within the distribution channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC11

The importer is a private company with 10 years international experience. The exporter has 40 years international experience. The relationship is 3 years old and both companies are committed to it. The importer seeks continuity of supply to service their retail customers. The exporter wants to provide additional opportunities to their producers while providing quality product to importers and their customers.

The importer perceives their supplier's strengths as their professionalism and the quality of the product. The main weakness is the need for more volume. The exporter's advantages are perceived as the personal relationships, the range of product, their history, continuity of staff, honesty and integrity. Weaknesses are 'tunnel vision', a lack of objectivity and the information freely shared with other exporters.

The supplier selection criteria are similar with the importer rating packaging much higher. Only one of the 'top 5' attributes matched. The importer is slightly more satisfied than the exporter perceives, but ranked the relationship lower.

The importer seek s products based on availability (seasonality) and supplier relations. Suppliers are identified through referrals. The exporter reactively assesses opportunities the "present themselves". Importer/distributors are identified through referrals.

The importer builds relationships over time based on communication, overcoming problems and building trust. There is a performance element to it. The exporter gets to know the person and builds a bridge through discussing sports or wine. The importer defines relationship quality as product, personality, dependability and trust. It is built over time through improving yourself, quality, and distribution, and, being persistent, patient and timely in delivery. The exporter defines relationship quality as honesty and trust, plus being able to deliver the product. It is built by working together, taking a personal interest and spending time together. Trust is important to both companies.

Brand is important to the importer, but only if there is a good product to support it. The exporter doesn't support brands and is using 'informational themes' about the product.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <---> HC12

The importer is a large public retailer with multiple outlets and about 10 years international experience. The exporter has 40 years international experience and is 100% export focused. The relationship is about 5 years old. The importer purchases from New Zealand to supplement local supply in terms of quality and quantity. Recently quantities have reduced due to local and export competition. The exporter seeks to consolidate and maintain relationships while managing the annual sales to each customer.

The importer perceives that there has been a weakening in the strength of the exporter's advantages due to some personnel leaving and setting up in opposition. The exporter's perceived advantages are their strong personal relationships, long export history, and continuity of staff, plus honesty and integrity. Perceived weaknesses are not being wide enough in their vision for the business and too much industry assistance.

Supplier selection attributes are very similar with three of the 'top 5' criteria matching. The importer is less satisfied than the exporter perceives. The exporter has a more positive view of the relationship. Regulations restrict the importers sources of product, however they are still seeking additional sources. Suppliers are identified through market research and industry networks. The exporter reacts to each market opportunity which "presents itself". Importers/distributors are identified through the industry network.

The importer builds a relationship incrementally using a trial order, larger orders and preferred supplier status with a one-on-one relationship and information sharing. The exporter uses references and a personal approach in relationship building. The importer defines relationship quality as "their ability to compete in the market place" while providing long lines of consistent quality and is dependable and cooperative. The exporter defines relationship quality as honesty and trust, built by people who are "a little bit special" and goes beyond the workplace to a personal interest.

The importer sees brands as a difficult issue. There are many meaningless brands, and a few respected ones. They would prefer to develop their own brands. The exporter does not see a role for brands, but promotes a product theme -- "ripe when dark".

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H2 <----> HC13

The importer is a large retailer with about 16 years international experience. The exporter has 40 years international experience and is 100% export focused. The relationship is about 16 years old. The importer imports to get a better quality product, to extend the season and because NZ exporters are more professional than the local suppliers. The exporter seeks to consolidate and maintain relationships while managing the annual sales to each customer.

The importer perceives the supplier advantage as the overall business approach and customer-focus. The weakness is the ability to forecast supply. The exporter's advantages are their strong personal relationships, long export history, and continuity of staff, plus honesty and integrity. The importer rates supplier selection attributes higher than the exporter with packaging rated much higher. One of the 'top 5' attributes matches. Importer satisfaction is rated higher by the importer. The importer rates the relationship as stronger but states that it is in decline. Even though the rating for the exporter remains high, the importer bought no product from the exporter the prior year, for the first time in 16 years. This was because the exporter, internally, was "a hell of a mess" and they "took their eye right off the business."

The importer selects countries based on import regulations, however, the prime selection criteria are product quality, availability and price. The exporter reacts to each market opportunity which "presents itself. Importers are identified through the industry network.

The importer builds relationships by being quality-driven, not price, and pays more for quality. The price premium (up to 100%) is supported by the customers in the market as there is demand for quality New Zealand product. The exporter uses referrals and a personal approach to build relationships. The importer defines relationship quality as trust, dependability, a commitment to a customer-focus, and a 'long haul' approach. The exporter defines relationship quality as honesty and trust, built by people who are "a little bit special" and goes beyond the workplace to a personal interest.

The importer sees brands as "becoming more important" as consumers are coming back and asking for a particular brand. Therefore, producers should brand their product.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H3 <---> HC14

The importer is a small private company with 21 years of international experience. The exporter is a small company which was formed 2 years ago based on a previous exporting company (10 years experience) which went bankrupt. The importer would like to expand the range of products imported and maintain existing relationships. The exporter wanted more control over the export process and to develop a relationship with the importer. They are looking to broaden the customer base and increase export tonnage four-fold.

The importer perceives the supplier as a 'fill-up' for domestic shortages. The supplier's weakness is the strength of the buyers position and consistent quality. The exporter's perceived advantages are a reputation for stability, improving competitiveness and price. Supplier selection attributes are more important to the importer than the exporter perceives, with two of the 'top 5' criteria matching. The importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceives. The relationship is only emerging yet the importer rates it as stronger.

The importer identifies suppliers via existing suppliers and trading companies, "If there is an 'A-grade' employee in the exporting company they will do business with an 'A-grade' company." For the exporter, country markets continue to 'evolve' as they get opportunities. Importers are difficult to identify. The importer begins relationships based on 'feeling and timing' -- human factors -- and these lead to better performance. The relationship must have a long term potential and it is developed jointly. The exporter uses a personal approach, a quick response to requests, and cultural awareness during visits -- time and hard work.

The importer says relationship quality depends on personalities, the import company owner's desire for a relationship with suppliers who have 'feeling and character', clarity of communication and continuous improvement. It has unquantifiable elements. The exporter defines relationship quality as someone you are comfortable with, knowing there will be mutual support when problems occur, and knowing they will 'go the extra mile' for you.

The importer does not buy brands and markets under their own brand. The exporter uses their own brand and considers the brand to be 'hugely important', particularly within the channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H3 <---> HC15

Both are private companies who had a previous joint venture relationship. The importer has 15 years overseas experience and the exporter 12. The importer sources many products from NZ and considers NZ companies to be the most reliable southern hemisphere supplier. The exporter wanted more control over the export process and to develop a relationship with the importer. They are looking to broaden the customer base and increase export tonnage four-fold. The importer perceives the supplier's advantages as their shared history, the close relationship, the 'hand-made' production process, and the different production season. The exporter's advantages are a reputation for stability, improving competitiveness and price.

The importer rates supplier selection attributes higher than the exporter and there is only one of the 'top 5' attributes matching. The exporter considers the importer to be a price-based buyer. The importer is more satisfied and has a more positive relationship perspective. The exporter is cautious about the relationship and considers it to be in 'decline', however the importer rates it as 'growing'.

The importer identifies the product, then who can supply the required quality and price, and is reliable. Once the supplier is selected, you have identified the country. The supplier is identified via the network, embassy lists and existing suppliers. For the exporter, importers are difficult to identify -- TRADENZ is a 'pig in a poke'. The importer begins with the business, then checks the suppliers reliability and performance. Then they visit the supplier to develop a relationship. "Performance comes before the relationship." The exporter uses a personal approach, a quick response to requests, and cultural awareness during visits.

The importer defines relationship quality as a willingness to do business; recognition and understanding of the importer's role; mutual respect and understanding; and, adapting to the market needs. The exporter defines relationship quality as someone you are comfortable with, mutual support when problems occur, and knowing they'll 'go the extra mile' for you.

The importer thinks brands are 'not so important' even though the brand is on the product sold. The exporter uses their own brand and considers the brand to be 'hugely important', particularly within the channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H3 <---> HC16

The importer is a public company which is part of a large international group of companies. They have been importing for about 10 years. The exporter has been exporting for 12 years. The importer considers sourcing from New Zealand to be equivalent to a local supply, it is competitive and a viable source of a volume, quality product. The exporter wanted more control over the export process and to develop a relationship with the importer. They are looking to broaden the customer base and increase export tonnage four-fold.

The importer perceives the exporter as 'hands-on', but weaknesses include the need to liaise with two companies and the timeliness of resolution of quality issues. The exporter's advantages are a reputation for stability, improving competitiveness and price. Supplier selection attributes are similar with the importer rating them higher and only one of the 'top 5' attributes missing. The satisfaction ratings are almost identical, with no major attribute differences. Both companies rated the overall relationship similar, however the importer rates the relationship as in decline and is not seeking a relationship, whereas the exporter rates the relationship as growing and is strongly seeking a relationship.

The importer identifies suppliers through local traders, their own network and through suppliers coming to them. For the exporter, country markets continue to 'evolve' as they get opportunities. Importers are difficult to identify. The exporter looks for 'heavyweight' importers to move product volume.

The importer defines relationship quality as being "not afraid to get their hands dirty" solving problems in the factory, price competitiveness, continuity of service, good communication and delivery. The exporter defines relationship quality as someone you are comfortable with, knowing there will be mutual support when problems occur, and knowing they will 'go the extra mile' for you.

Brands are important for identification purposes and this allows the importer to assess the supplier performance for contract renewal purposes. The exporter uses their own brand and considers the brand to be 'hugely important', particularly within the channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H3 <---> HC17

The importer is a small public company which is part of a larger group of companies. They have been importing for about 6 years. The exporter has 12 years of exporting experience. The importer wants to dominate the local market for a range of imported products. The exporter wants to broaden the customer base and increase export tonnage four-fold.

The importer perceives the supplier's advantages as their knowledge of the raw materials and their commitment to the producers. Weakness is their relative inexperience in business, in their current form. The exporter's advantages are a reputation for stability, improving competitiveness and price. The importer's decision on sourcing product is customer-driven and requires knowledge of the international supply situation. Suppliers are identified through trade conventions, visiting suppliers factories and 'broadcast' faxes to supply regions. The decision is country-based, then the supplier is identified, for that particular product. For the exporter, country markets continue to 'evolve' as they get opportunities. Importers are difficult to identify.

The importer develops a relationship step-by-step using a long-term view of the relationship: from sample to competitive assessment, market understanding and, finally, to face-to-face visits to confirm long-term commitments. The exporter uses a personal approach, a quick response to requests, and cultural awareness during visits -- time and hard work. Relationship quality is defined by the importer as a differentiated supplier with a vision for the product, supported by responsiveness, communication, consistency and a belief in a corporate (not a personal) relationship. The exporter defines relationship quality as someone you are comfortable with, knowing there will be mutual support when problems occur, and knowing they will 'go the extra mile' for you. " Trust is assumed -- "your word is your bond: that in all things, whatever is said is acted upon, both verbally and written." The exporter determines the people you can trust by judgment and osmosis.

The importer considers the brand concept to be critical and their parent company is actively promoting the brand. The brand creates "a premium price and a premium in the relationship." The exporter uses their own brand and considers the brand to be 'highly important', particularly within the channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H3 <---> HC18

Both are private companies, with the importer having 20 years overseas experience. The exporter is a small company with 12 years exporting experience. The importer buys due to the availability of products. The exporter wanted more control over the export process and to develop a relationship with the importer. They are looking to broaden the customer base and increase export tonnage four-fold.

The importer perceives the supplier's advantages as being a producer of the product, having honourable people, and the product quality. The weakness is a lack of new product information. The exporter's advantages are a reputation for stability, improving competitiveness and price.

The importer rates selection criteria lower than the exporter with speed of delivery rated much lower. Three of the 'top 5' attributes match. The exporter has an accurate perception of the importer's satisfaction. The exporter rates the relationship higher than the importer. The importer bases sourcing decisions on the availability of supply of the product. Suppliers are usually selected through local brokers as the importers strength is in the process. For the exporter, country markets continue to 'evolve' as they get opportunities. Importers are difficult to identify. The exporter looks for 'heavyweight' importers to move product volume.

Relationship quality is defined by the importer as being based on compatibility of business style, which is built up over time, and the supplier not 'beating-up' the price. It is built with a total channel (producer to customer) perspective, over time. The exporter defines relationship quality as someone you are comfortable with, knowing there will be mutual support when problems occur, and knowing they will 'go the extra mile' for you. It is built with mutual respect, genuineness, an interest in their business, and putting extra effort into the relationship. Trust is built slowly, on performance. The exporter determines the people you can trust by judgment and osmosis

The importer has his own brand, therefore brand has no value for buying. The exporter uses their own brand and considers the brand to be 'hugely important', particularly within the channel.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H4 <---> HC19

Both are private companies. The exporter has 2 years of exporting experience, but an additional 12 years with a previous company. The importer seeks an off-season source of product and uses 3 NZ exporters. The exporter grew up in the industry and went independent for the lifestyle of being your own boss. The exporter targets the "professionals of the industry that are of an economic size."

The supplier does not have a particular advantage to the importer, except that they trust them and they sell to similar size companies and therefore are in for the long-term. The exporter perceives their advantage as being a counter-season supplier with a "high-class", pest-free product, a professional approach and quality management systems.

The importer selects the source by product and its seasonal availability, and primarily focuses on NZ for southern hemisphere supply. Exporters are identified through their export history and experience. The exporter selects markets based on their ability to pay for the product, market diversification, research, network references and, occasionally, TRADENZ. Importers are selected based on channel references and personal visits.

The importer builds a relationship on supplier performance and likes to deal with the best (No. 1) exporter. The exporter builds the relationship on supplying quality product at competitive prices -- "it comes down to performance and follow-up", communication, good information, and planning. The importer defines relationship quality as the best supplier, providing the best quality at a fair price, plus good service. The exporter says relationship quality varies with the exporter and the market. Customers follow people, therefore individual personality is important. It is based on meeting "certain criteria" and a "gut feel" for the relationship.

Brands are "not so important" to the importer, but they do give an image to the buyer. The exporter considers brands to be of "arguable" value, and they are not large enough to use branding in a significant way.

[Note: the importer answered the open-ended questions, but did not complete the survey]

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H4 <---> HC20

Both are small private companies with 2 years of exporting experience. The exporter has an additional 12 years experience with a previous company. The relationship is one year old. New Zealand is a counter-season producer and importing provides a basis for retaining local customers. The importer is also experimenting with producing product in overseas markets. The exporter targets the "professionals of the industry that are of an economic size."

The importer perceives supplier advantages as a high level of service with frequent contact, providing useful information, and good quality control. The exporter perceives their advantage as being a counter-season supplier with a "high-class", pest-free product, a professional approach and quality management systems.

Supplier selection criteria is quite similar with four of the 'top 5' attributes matching. Product is sourced based on market conditions, by season. The country is selected based "on a balance of quality and price." The suppliers are sourced via Embassy lists, a letter requesting information, reference checking with other importers, and selecting a supplier based on a competitive quote (price and quality). Initially a transaction-based approach is used "until we know the supplier's ability." The exporter selects markets based on their ability to pay for the product, market diversification, research, network references and, occasionally, TRADENZ. importers are selected based on channel references and personal visits.

The importer finds that international supplier relationships are easy to build if the exporter is eager to sell. The exporter builds the relationship on supplying quality product at competitive prices, "it comes down to performance and follow-up", communication, good information, and planning. Relationship quality, to the importer, is a long-term contract with a producer. The exporter says relationship quality varies with the exporter and the market. Customers follow people, therefore individual personality is important. It is based on meeting "certain criteria" and a "gut feel" for the relationship.

The importer's customers request specific brands, therefore, once the brand quality is accepted it "has big name value." The exporter considers brands to be of "arguable" value, and they are not large enough to use branding in a significant way.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H5 <---> HC21

The exporter is about four times the size of the importer, however, the importer is important to the local import trade. Both have approximately the same international experience. The exporter is a market leader in one product and seeks to expand while becoming more professional in approach. The importer charts vessels and the exporter produces to meet the importer's shipping dates. The relationship is cooperative. The importer perceives the exporter's advantages as communication, fulfilment of promises and trustworthiness. The exporter perceives their advantage as understanding the market.

There is a common understanding of the supplier selection criteria with no large differences. Only two of the 'top 5' criteria match. The importer is slightly less satisfied than the exporter perceives. The exporter perceives the relationship as stronger than the importer. However, the importer noted that they have a very good relationship.

The importer decides to source based on seasons and the company's ability to deliver to quality standards. The exporter looks at market potential and compatibility with their capabilities. They attempt to obtain a "strategic mental alliance", that is, understand and meet the service needs of their customer. The importer seeks performance prior to developing a relationship: performance in terms of delivery and claim handling. The exporter builds on strong communication, complemented by performance to commitments.

Relationship quality, to the importer, is fulfilment of commitment, product quality, claim handling and honesty, as part of the overall cycle of business. They perceive "personality and personal characteristics are reflected in the quality of the product." The exporter perceives relationship quality from the importer's perspective and includes profitability at minimal risk. As an exporter relationship quality is long-term planning for product development, "togetherness", and all trying to make money equally.

The importer can distinguish differences in brands, so they are important. They also recognise that consumers cannot distinguish different brands. The exporter understands that brand promotion is built on consistent product quality.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H5 <---> HC22

The exporter is four times the size of the private importer. The importer has almost twice the length of international experience of the exporter, however the exporter has a senior executive with extensive market experience. The importer sought new products from New Zealand and now only imports through one exporter. The exporter is a market leader in one product and seeks to expand while becoming more professional in approach. They are very committed to the market. However, the importer does not perceive that commitment and rates the commitment as "Not so good."

The importer perceives the exporter's advantages as the many small things they do well and the fact that they are a leading company with good producers. The exporter perceives their advantage as understanding the market.

There is a common understanding of the supplier selection criteria with product range and past sales experience rated much lower by the importer. Three of the 'top 5' criteria match. The importer is slightly less satisfied than the exporter perceives. The exporter perceives the relationship as much stronger than the importer, particularly in the area of loyalty.

The importer sources products on a global basis, with cost of freight being an important item. The exporter looks at market potential and compatibility with their capabilities. They attempt to obtain a "strategic mental alliance", that is, understand and meet the service needs of their customer.

Relationship quality, to the importer, "a good balance between the companies" and a stable relationship. The exporter perceives relationship quality from the importer's perspective and includes profitability at minimal risk. As an exporter relationship quality is long-term planning for product development, "togetherness", and all trying to make money equally.

The importer perceives that good brands can command "a 5~10% price increase", but acknowledges that it is only important at the trade level. The exporter understands that brand promotion is built on consistent product quality.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

H5 <---> HC23

Both the exporter and importer are public listed companies. The importer has three times the length of international experience of the exporter and is much larger, however the exporter has a senior executive with extensive market experience. The exporter is a market leader in one product and seeks to expand while becoming more professional in approach. The importer is "serious about the source", and receives good data, but acknowledges the variability of supply. Continuity of source is important to the importer and they continue to import when price is higher than the market price.

The importer perceives the exporter's advantages as the security of supply and their clarity of information. The exporter perceives their advantage as understanding the market. There is a common understanding of the supplier selection criteria with no major differences. Two of the 'top 5' criteria match. The importer is slightly less satisfied than the exporter perceives. Both perceive a strong relationship. The importer sources products on a global basis, with the decision being product quality and price driven. Seasonality identifies the hemisphere, then certain countries are preferred. The key is whether the supplier can produce the required volume. The exporter looks at market potential and compatibility with their capabilities. They attempt to understand and meet the service needs of their customer.

The importer requires a saleable product before they will build a relationship, then requires the ability for the parties to work together and share the benefits (contributions) of the relationship. The relationship is built on many small, economically viable successes. Relationship quality, to the importer, sharing objectives and values, continuous improvement, and "good business ... between the parties." The exporter perceives relationship quality from the importer's perspective and includes profitability at minimal risk. As an exporter relationship quality is long-term planning for product development, "togetherness", and all trying to make money equally.

The importer expects brand recognition to grow in importance, if the brand is a sign of quality -- currently nobody reaches the Japanese quality standard. The exporter brand is preferred. The exporter understands that brand promotion is built on consistent product quality.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A1 <---> AC1

Both companies are manufacturers, with the importer having a substantial distribution presence in the exporter's destination market. Their overseas experience is extensive. The importer wants to establish the exporter's brand in the domestic market and also expand their own product sales with the brand. The exporter wished to be in the three major worldwide markets, but was not seeking a significant financial investment in those markets.

The product and brand are the exporting company's strength, however the importer notes a lack of senior management's desire to pursue opportunities and a lack of responsiveness in the exporting organisation. Both companies are committed to their efforts, however there is a lack of specific relationship commitment in this relationship, as reflected in the fixed term 'trial' contract and the relationship difficulties reported by the importer. The importer reports the relationship as in 'decline'; the exporter as 'emerging' -- there is little common understanding of the relationship. Relationship ratings reflect this mismatch. Both companies consider trust as very important, however they have not established trust in this relationship.

The supplier selection criteria is not well understood by the exporter and only two of the 'top 5' criteria match. Seven (of 26) attributes scored the maximum rating gap of 5 points. The importer is slightly less satisfied than the exporter perceives. The importer focuses on the brand and the product rather than the country when identifying sources of product. They normally have a contract with suppliers, but there is flexibility in the approach. The exporter is continuing to seek entry into this market using the brand and NZ image as leverage, but has had limited success. Brands are the reason the importer is in business, and the reason this relationship exists.

For the importer, the relationship is built on 'trial and error' and the responsiveness of the supplier. The exporter relies on communication and understanding. The importer views relationship quality as dependability and reliability, but it is not price-based. Relationship quality is built by performance. The exporter's perspective includes mutual benefit, profit balance, shared goals and understanding, frequent communication, responsiveness, and dependability. Although both companies appear to conceptually understand how to build relationship quality, the actual relationship does not reflect these concepts.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A1 <---> AC2

The importer is one of a number of importing companies within a group, specialising in branded products for sale on the domestic market. The importing company is small, but has 14 years experience with this exporter. The exporter is a manufacturer with one exclusive distributor in this market. The importer perceives communication as a strength of the exporter and there is a sharing of opinions which generates "good business" focused on the overall benefits to the business.

Supplier selection criteria is well understood with few difference however, only two of the 'top 5' criteria are the same. The importer is less satisfied than the exporter perceives but this does not reflect the positive attitude of the person handling the day-to-day import activities, who is much more satisfied with the arrangement. The importer pays little attention to country when sourcing product; rather they decide on the product, its cost and quality. For branded products, a long-term contract is required. Brands are the 'life blood' of both companies. Trust is "second to brand" in importance, but must be supported by a written agreement.

Relationship ratings are similar with the importer rating most items one point lower than the exporter. The importer builds supplier relationships by providing data on the market and company, then spending time with the supplier. They require the supplier to also make an effort. The exporter works hard to ensure there is understanding and this is enhanced by the export manager previously working for the importer and the importer's staff having worked in the exporters country.

Relationship quality, for the importer, is based on the interpersonal relationship, which must go beyond the numbers. This also includes the exporter understanding the market quality standards. Relationship quality is built on product differentiation and performance. The exporter defines relationship quality as mutual benefit and profits, with shared goals and long-term direction, plus mutual understanding and responsiveness. Relationship quality, for the exporter, is based on communication, visits and honesty.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A2 <---> AC3

The exporter is significantly larger (60 versus 2) than their importer. Both companies are similar in ownership and international experience. The business seems to be opportunistic as the objectives of the companies are not complimentary. The importer is tied closely to NZ, and as such has limited exporter options. The exporter is committed to the US market, but may go direct. This is primarily a "house" or "private" brand channel.

The importers perception of strengths and weaknesses are different, but complimentary to the exporters view. The differences do not appear to create barriers to business. The exporter matched three of the importer's "top 5" supplier selection criteria. Overall, the supplier selection criteria are reasonably well matched, but the exporter significantly overestimated the importance of four criteria. The importer is less satisfied than the exporter perceived.

Relationship ratings are close with the importer higher. The exporter appears more cautious in the relationship, but is proceeding. The exporter is very flexible in their approach, but has a focused overall strategy for expansion which may take them beyond the current importer.

The exporter bases relationships on the suitability of the product to the market, then builds a relationship through flexibility and cooperation with the importer. The importer focuses on a few customers and tries to identify NZ products which may be suitable to their needs. There are benefits to each. However, the relationship appears to continue due to the exporters continuing to have a need for the current importer. There is not a long-term focus.

There are differences in perceptions of 'relationship quality', but the underlying philosophies are similar. The importer's desire for a commitment to the US market is more appropriate to a new exporter rather than a 5 year relationship. The exporter's approach to building relationship quality is complimentary to the importers selection requirements, however, the longevity of this channel may depend on the importers ability to increase the volumes.

Overall, this is an ongoing relationship which has potential to grow, however, the exporter appears to be seeking alternate approaches to entering the US market to open up more opportunities outside the niche market of the importer.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A2 <---> AC4

Importer is significantly (3 times) larger than the exporter. This opportunity was created by the exporter, by approaching the importer with a product concept to meet excess demand in the market. The importer may be opportunistic, rather than have a planned international sourcing plan. Importer and exporter are mutual agents for other's products.

Importers perception of advantages and weaknesses are similar to the exporter: except the exporter is less satisfied with current quality. Overall, the supplier selection criteria are reasonably well matched with advertising/promotion support rated much higher by the importer. The importer is slightly more satisfied than the exporter perceived.

Exporter relationship ratings are higher. Although there are no reported major relationship issues, an export incentive policy led to this relationship being terminated in late 1996. This importer was the exporter's major export customer (50 ~ 60% of exports). The exporter's exports grew at an average 4% over 6 years: this customer grew at an average 220% over 6 years. When the relationship terminated, one factory shortened it's work-week by one day.

The exporter is very flexible in their approach to the identification and development of markets, but has a focused overall strategy for expansion. The importer looks for a supplier who has quality, price, delivery and reliability advantages. In this relationship the importer was opportunistic. There are differences in the approaches to building a relationship, but the exporter has sufficient underlying flexibility to meet the importer's requirements.

The importer has a major brand which dominates the company image. there is no place for exporter brands. The exporter provides house-brands to customers to utilise their brand strength so this matches the importer's requirements.

Overall, the exporter created this opportunity and build the business by convincing the importer that the product was beneficial to their branded product line. The importer actively supported a local competitor to provide an equivalent product to take advantage of government export incentive for local product exports. The exporter worked hard, but the importer was opportunistic and turned the exporter's idea to their own advantage.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A2 <---> AC5

Both companies are similar in size, ownership and international experience. The importer considers this supplier equivalent to a local supplier. Commitment from importer is conditional on pricing, product and cooperation, however, the exporter is flexible in meeting these requirements. Importers perception of strengths and weaknesses are similar to the exporter, except that the exporter is less satisfied with current quality; and, the importer requires 'on-time delivery' improvement. Overall, the supplier selection criteria are reasonably well matched with only 4 'outliers'. The importer is slightly less satisfied than the exporter perceived. There was a major drop in sales in 1995 (70% fall), but the underlying relationship is stable.

Relationship ratings are close with the exporter higher. Importer is interested in creating a "win-win situation" and having an ongoing relationship. Overall, the importer is very positive towards the relationship. The exporter's approach to the identification and development of markets is complimentary to the importer's requirements for suppliers. The exporter is very flexible in their approach, but has a focused overall strategy for expansion. The exporter bases relationships on the suitability of the product to the market, then builds a relationship through flexibility and cooperation with the importer. This compliments the importer's focus on identifying the right product market and creating a win-win situation.

There are differences in perceptions of 'relationship quality', but the underlying philosophies are similar. The importer thinks personal relationships are "nice", but not important. The exporter's approach to building relationship quality is complimentary to the importers selection approach, therefore they will meet the importer's supplier requirements.

The importer has a single major brand which dominates the company image. Each of its agency brands are in the 'top 3 in the world', but are overshadowed by the overall "image" brand. The exporter provides house-brands to customers to utilise their brand strength.

Overall, this is a mutually beneficial, dyadic relationship which is not critical to either company. The exporter's approach to their importers is flexible and this provides a strong foundation for building sales and developing a relationship.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A3 <---> AC6

Both are private companies with similar length of international experience. The exporter is significantly larger. The importer and exporter appear to have complimentary objectives which satisfy the needs of both companies. Overall, the supplier selection criteria are reasonably well matched. There appears to be a few areas where there are differences, but these are not in the "top 5" selection criteria. The importer is slightly more satisfied than the exporter perceived.

The importer visits New Zealand to identify new products and relies on references from existing suppliers. This does not match the exporters approach, except for the initial meeting was through another exporter. There appears to be little in common in the approaches beyond the initial introduction from another exporter.

Importer relationship ratings are significantly higher. Both see value in the relationship, but it appears "tired" - both have complaints about the other. The importer is far more optimistic than the exporter and there are some significant gaps in the relationship ratings (gaps of 4~5 on 5 of the 11 items). The exporter rates the relationship as in decline; the importer as mature. Although neither dyad member is seeking to enter new countries, there remains a question if the dyad will survive in the future. The exporter's approach to relationship quality appears to be inconsistent with the importer's relationship quality requirements, especially in the area of commitment to the market.

The importer focuses on private label products, but will handle brand products. The importer sees "Made in NZ" as sufficient branding. The exporter is moving into branded products to create a unique image and raise margins. The exporter does recognise that branded products are not for all types of customers.

Overall, the exporter and importer gain some advantage from this relationship, however there appears to be little to indicate that the relationship will be important to either company, nor that it will be long term. The exporter appears to be utilising an importer who was introduced to the company, but considers the market to be a lower priority.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A3 <---> AC7

Both are private companies with the importer's retail business being about 100 years old and three times the size of the exporter. The importer has been importing for 70 years, the exporter selling for 17, however, the importers direct experience is limited as they have used a trading company for most imports. The importer began buying from New Zealand through a "sister city" relationship and the business evolved through a desire to build a business relationship. Financially, neither company is dependent on the other. The importer pays little attention to exporting country, but selects suppliers based on the product. The exporter was avoiding this market and only entered due to an introduction. Since then, the market has expanded and is becoming important.

The importer uses a transaction basis for trade, initially, as the relationship develops. They select suppliers based on performance with other companies or via a trading company recommendation. The exporter works through word-of-mouth and references to get customers in this market. The supplier selection criteria is well understood by both parties and their perceptions are closely matched. Only two of the 'top 5' selection criteria matched. The importer is less satisfied than perceived by the importer.

Relationship perceptions are close with the importer more satisfied with the relationship than the exporter perceives. The importer considers the exporter's attitude to expanding sales as critical to building a relationship. This works well with the exporter's approach, provided they are a priority importer. Otherwise, the level of exporter support is minimal.

The importer finds the exporters approach to 'relationship quality' to be very positive, however their measures and approach appear different to that which the importer seeks. The importer is very performance oriented in relationship development, whereas the exporter tends towards understanding and simplicity. The exporter also mentioned avoiding late deliveries, a key factor for the importer.

The exporter considers the brand to be important and has introduced new brands as a major marketing strategy. The importer considers the brand to be unknown in the market, but is promoting it in an effort to differentiate it from "no-brand" cheap Asian competitors.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A3 <---> AC8

Both companies are comparable in size and ownership, with the exporter having less experience in international business. The importer was not seeking a New Zealand supplier, but was introduced via a major supplier and the business has developed from that introduction. The exporter was not seeking to enter this market, but responded to the opportunity. The importer sees the New Zealand business style as an advantage. The exporter rates their brand as their major strength, however, the importer rates the lack of a "big brand" as the major weakness. The exporter's product does not fit the importers target markets, but the relationship is maintained due to the introduction. This issue needs to be addressed by the exporter.

Overall, both parties provided a similar rating to the relationship questions. The importer considered the relationship to be emerging, but the exporter considered it to be mature. The exporters assessment was based on the referred credibility from the other major supplier, but this opinion was not shared by the importer. The importer uses "borderless selection" when considering suppliers, but is aware that some countries cause problems. They will not seek a long-term relationship without exclusive distribution. Transaction-based suppliers are evaluated after 2~3 years and either dropped or converted to exclusive supply. Thus the relationship is only emerging and its future is uncertain.

The importer focuses on an economic basis for relationship quality, followed by an interpersonal relationship and exporter performance (lead-time, quality): "Performance comes before a relationship." This is consistent with the exporter's approach although the emphasis is different.

Brands are not important to the importer unless they are a "big name". New products must be introduced to the market. the exporter sees their brand as a major strength and important to sales.

Overall, this relationship is just emerging and there are inconsistencies which need to be overcome for the relationship to extend beyond the importer's two-to-three year trial period. However, there is potential for a successful, strong relationship.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A3 <---> AC10

The exporter is a manufacturer and the importer a small retailer with three stores. The exporter has more experience (17 years) than the importer (5~6 years) who buys primarily through local agents. Buying direct from this exporter was based on the suitability of the product, the quality and the manufacturing standards. The exporter is very committed, however, the importer is driven by the sales volume through the retail store.

The brand is the exporter's perceived advantage, however the importer likes the type of product, which is not readily available locally. The importer sources product rather than focusing on a country. This matches the exporter's product-based, niche marketing approach. The individual suppliers are identified from the market, trade shows, and suppliers approaching the retail store.

The supplier selection criteria is well understood by both companies as is the level of satisfaction. No major rating differences were recorded. Overall, the importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceived.

The importer is slightly more positive about the relationship, with minimal rating differences. The importer's approach to suppliers is contractual and transaction-based. If the product sells, a relationship develops. The exporter likes to develop the relationship early, but is aware of the need to deliver the product on-time.

Supplier support and understanding of seasonal sales variations are important to the importer in terms of relationship quality. The exporter compliments this with keeping things simple and "running smoothly". However, underlying the importer's needs is product performance.

There is a match with regard to the importance of brands. The exporter's brands 'piggy-back' on the retail outlet's icons to gain brand awareness and there are opportunities to increase their exposure. Brands will continue to be important to both companies.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A3 <---> AC11

Both are private companies. The importer is primarily an agent, specialising in a product range within a niche market. The initial contact was made by the exporter and the importer responded to the unique product -- to a point where they now only handle the exporter's product (100% of the importer's business). The business is also important to the exporter (32% exports; 5% sales). The relationship is about nine years old.

The importer finds that the product is not available locally and the exporter has a "very similar way of doing business", thus they are strongly committed to the arrangement. The exporter's primary advantage, from the importer's perspective, is quality. The exporter also listens to the market needs.

The importer selects the supplier rather than the country, although country may be used as a screening mechanism to exclude some suppliers. The exporter is seeking to expand in the importer's market. The importer does not seek suppliers, but rather screens those approaching the company. No other supplier has been successful in establishing a relationship due to their supply inconsistency. The supplier selection criteria is understood by both companies, with only a few items varying in response. In general, the importer rated attributes higher. Three of the "top 5" attributes were the same, however the exporter rated another very low. The importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceives.

The average relationship rating was almost identical, with only minor individual rating variations. However, the importer rates the relationship as growing, while the exporter perceives it to be mature. The relationship developed based on performance, "If it doesn't work out then the relationship doesn't develop." The exporter promotes personal contact, but recognises the need to deliver on time. Relationship quality is based on "mutual trust" and "having each other's interest at heart." Building relationships requires communication. This is followed by a consistent product, modifications for the local market and product delivery -- again, performance.

The exporter is promoting brands for the future, but the importer is sceptical of their long-term value.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A4 <---> AC12

Both companies are private, with the importer being much smaller than the exporter. Both have extensive international experience (23~25 years), with this specific relationship about 7 years old. The importer likes the quality and value of the product and are using it to compete against the two major brands -- it will be a "flagship brand" for the business. This complements the exporter's desire to balance the seasonality of sales and expand internationally with branded products. The importer "stumbled through the process" of importing. The exporter has made at least two false starts in the market, but has now build a substantial customer base. The exporter finds new customers through trade shows and the existing network.

The overall supplier selection criteria is well understood, but there are two exceptions where the exporter under-rates the attribute importance: 'dependable delivery' (a 'top 5' item for the importer), and 'speed of delivery'. Only one of the 'top 5' attributes match. Overall the importer is more satisfied than the exporter perceives.

Relationship perceptions are close with the importer stronger on seeking a closer alliance. The exporter views the relationship as emerging; the importer as growing. The relationship is based on realistic promises, specifically for production capacity, for the importer. This compliments the exporters focus on communication, but they also recognise the resource/time constraint in developing relationships.

For relationship quality the importer focuses on the product and its availability, a lack of disruption, professionalism, and sales quantities. The exporter defines relationship quality as the level of communication and mutual trust. The exporter sees relationship quality as a resource investment with a personal dimension. The exporter used to believe in trust, however now "experience has led me to believe that the sole purpose or basis of a relationship is on the commercial viability of the relationship and trust develops thereafter."

The exporter says "Brands give you credibility as a company. They are absolutely critical...". The importer says that, "Customers will sometimes ask for a brand and pay a premium", but, "the exporter's brands mean nothing -- yet."

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A4 <---> AC13

The importer is a small distributor specialising (75~80%) in imports from New Zealand. The exporter is larger and the manufacturer of the exported product. The importer is a niche marketer, seeking NZ products that are interesting, unique, price competitive and made by companies "not afraid to export." This suits the exporter, who is seeking to spread risk and balance revenue. Both are committed to the relationship, but from a self-interest perspective. There appears to be little 'shared understanding' between the exporter and importer.

The exporter is seeking economically viable expansion, the importer more NZ product. The exporter is seeking joint ventures in this market to gain commitment from the importer. Their relationships are initiated through trade shows (90%) and importer initiatives (10%). Perceptions of the importer's supplier selection criteria vary and there are some large individual attribute differences (5 items with a gap over 4). Only two of the top five criteria match. The importer is more satisfied than the importer perceives.

Relationship perceptions also vary with the exporter more cautious about the strength of the relationship -- "having a customer overseas is like having a girlfriend overseas ... it is difficult to interpret what the other's intentions are and it is hard to develop trust." Both perceive relationships are built on communication, with an underlying assumption that the product is suitable and price competitive. They share the view that relationship quality is built on communication, trust and shared values. This quality is built through time and a mutual interest and commitment to the business.

The importer relies on trust and expects the exporter to "do what you'll say you'll do." The exporter used to consider trust very important, but now relies on the commercial viability of the relationship and allows trust to develop naturally based on the volume of business. The exporter's experience has "led me to disinvest in relationships and focus on the commercial viability."

The exporter perceives greater value in the brand than the importer, but the importer perceives value in the "Made in NZ" label. The exporter does not believe in selling the 'NZ story' -- they rely on product quality, the right price and on-time delivery.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A4 <---> AC14

The importer is a multi-outlet retailer with over 30 years importing experience from various parts of the world. The exporter manufactures the exported product and has over 25 years experience exporting to many countries. The importer perceives NZ products as good quality and sees value in the "Made in NZ" label. The exporter seeks to spread risk and balance revenue. Both companies see the brand and product quality as major strengths.

The importer tends to follow cheap labour forces in sourcing product, unless the exporter comes to them with a product. The relationship is currently on a transaction basis, but could be extended beyond that. Both the exporter and importer rely on trade fairs to develop contacts. The supplier selection criteria has rating variances, but only two large (4 or over) differences. Only one of the 'top 5' attributes agree. The satisfaction levels are quite close.

Relationship perceptions are very close with only one item having a large rating difference. The importer believes that the exporter needs to do the work to build a relationship -- it is not two-way. The relationship is only of value to decision-making, when all other things (especially price) are equal. The exporter relies on the product quality and communication to build relationships.

Relationship quality, to the importer, is knowing their business (and their customers), plus the flexibility to change products for the market, and back-up services, including communication access. The exporter uses communication and quality to build mutual trust and relationship quality. The importer requires a viable product to build relationship quality and the exporter must do most of the work. The exporter basis relationship development on "commercial viability". There is a match in the philosophy of a commercial product-based relationship, but the exporter has not taken the initiative to develop this relationship.

Both companies see value in brands, however the importer is moving towards 'house brands' supported by the manufacturers brand.

The importer must be able to rely on what the exporter says and not be surprised by price increases. Trust must be earned by the exporter, rather than assuming the exporter is trusted.

Appendix 6: Case Summaries

A4 <---> AC15

The importer is a purchasing company, without full-time employees, which specialises in the sale of distressed products. The relationship with the manufacturer/exporter is only a few months old and is based on a desire to move a large quantity of stock, leveraged on residual brand awareness. The relationship is opportunistic, based on the ability to make a profit. The primary advantage for the importer is to use the brand name to make a profit. The importer is product-driven for sourcing; the exporter seeking to find 'financially viable markets'. Trade fairs are important sources of contacts for both importer and exporter.

The nature of the relationship influences the importer's ratings of the selection criteria and they have a lower rating of attribute importance than the exporter. The satisfaction ratings were more difficult for the importer, but overall satisfaction is high. The exporter perceives the relationship as further developed than the importer (growing vs. emerging) and rated all relationship attributes -- the importer was unable to rate all attributes. Overall, the relationship is very positive.

Relationship develop socially in the initial stages, assuming there is an underlying marketable product. Regular communication is part of the development process. Relationship quality is based on a product that sells and "generates an appropriate margin", to a "stage where you almost develop a passion for the product because it's so good to you." This ties in with the exporter's approach of a "commercially viable" product, supported by communication. The importer considers trust important, but is sceptical about the trustworthiness of exporters. The exporter relies on the strength of the product, rather than trust, to gain export sales.

The importer views brands as a "big asset" and a "big liability" -- the liability being a lack of margin. The exporter's product sells "on the strength of it's quality rather than necessarily the brand name." The exporter is currently promoting the brand as a selling advantage.

Appendix 7: Summary of Relationship Stage Variables

RELATIONSHIP VARIABLE	THEORETICAL ARTICLES	EMPIRICAL ARTICLES
Commitment	Ford (1981); Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Wilson (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995); Sheaves & Barnes (1996)	Styles & Ambler (1994)
Trust	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Jackson (1994); Wilson (1995); Berry (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995); Nevin (1995); Sheaves & Barnes (1996)	
Cooperation	Wilson (1995)	
Mutual Goals	Wilson (1995)	Styles & Ambler (1994)
Dependence/Power/Control	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Wilson (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995); Frazier & Anita (1995); Nevin (1995)	Heide (1994)
Performance Satisfaction	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Wilson (1995); Berry (1995)	Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
Comparison of Alternates	Wilson (1995)	Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
Adaptation/Customisation	Jackson (1994); Wilson (1995); Bitner (1995)	Heide (1994); Palmer & Bejou (1994)
Structural Bonds/ Nonretrievable Investment	Wilson (1995); Berry (1995); Bitner (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995)	Tumbull & Wilson (1989)
Social Bonds	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Wilson (1995); Berry (1995)	Tumbull & Wilson (1989)
Shared Technology	Wilson (1995)	
Experience	Ford (1981)	
Uncertainty/Risk	Ford (1981); Weitz & Jap (1995)	
Distance	Ford (1981)	
Communication	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Berry (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995); Frazier & Anita (1995)	Styles & Ambler (1994)
Bargaining/Negotiation	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Weitz & Jap (1995)	Palmer & Bejou (1994)
Conflict	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Weitz & Jap (1995)	
Norms	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Weitz & Jap (1995); Frazier & Anita (1995); Nevin (1995)	
Expectations	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Berry (1995)	
Interpersonal Attraction	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987)	
Stress	Dwyer, Schurr & Oh (1987); Bitner (1995)	
Quality	Jackson (1994)	Styles & Ambler (1994); Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
People	Weitz & Jap (1995)	Styles & Ambler (1994)
Reputation/Referrals		Styles & Ambler (1994); Palmer & Bejou (1994)
Value Creation/Benefits	Jackson (1994); Anderson (1994); Berry (1995); Weitz & Jap (1995)	
Information Sharing		Styles & Ambler (1994); Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
Interaction Frequency		Styles & Ambler (1994); Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
Length of Relationship	[Implicit in many 'relationship stages' models]	Heide (1994); Leuthesser & Kohli (1995)
Promise Keeping	Berry (1995); Bitner (1995)	

Appendix 8: Companies Participating in Research

Export Companies:

Alliance Textiles (N.Z.) Ltd	Canterbury International Limited
Fresh Pacific Marketing Ltd	Grocorp Pacific Ltd
Freshco - The Fresh Fruit Co. of New Zealand	
Horticulture Marketing Ltd	Tamahine Holdings Limited
The Hat Factory Limited	Turners & Growers Exports

Import Companies:

Aussie Disposals Pty. Ltd	Bay State Produce Co., Ltd
Canterbury of New Zealand Japan Co., Ltd	Cadbury Schweppes Pty., Ltd
Country Smart Pty. Ltd	Coles Supermarkets Pty., Ltd, Melbourne
Coles Supermarkets Pty., Ltd, Brisbane	David Oppenheimer and Company Ltd
DeLong Sportswear, Inc.	De Poi Produce Pty., Ltd
Driza-Bone Pty. Ltd	Eiko Shoji Co., Ltd
Forpan Pty. Ltd	Fresh Produce Brokers Pty., Ltd
Fruitmark Pty., Ltd	Grant J. Hunt Company Ltd
Harvestpac (Australia) Pty., Ltd	Hawke Agencies Pty. Ltd
Henselite (Australia) Pty. Ltd	Imanaka Ltd.
Jusco., Ltd	Kobe Yoko Ltd
Life Foods, Co., Ltd	Meika Corporation Ltd
Nakano & Co., Ltd	New Zealand Outdoors Ltd
Nippi Trading Co., Ltd	Screaming Eagle Ltd
Simped Foods, Pty. Ltd	the Giumarra Companies
World Fruits Co., Ltd	Yagahashi Department Store Co., Ltd
Yamakiyo-Seika Corp	Yamato & Traders Co., Ltd

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